

PETER STRAUB ■ FREDERIK POHL ■ NIGHT GALLERY

Rod Serling's
THE **TWILIGHT ZONE** Magazine

February 1989

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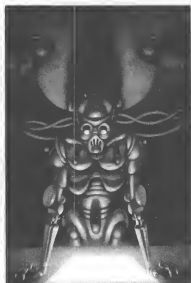
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IN THE TWILIGHT ZONE

Charles Dickens showed us, in his classic tale "A Christmas Carol," that the lines between reality and fantasy, between dreams and facts, can often grow thin and pale. But he also reminded us that things are possible in that land of dreams that are not possible in the light of day. With the holiday season upon us, what better time to remind ourselves of that secret power of dreams?

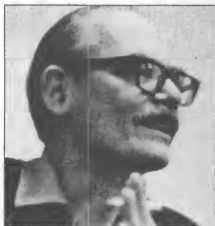
To begin with, this issue brings several intimate glimpses into the art of dreammaking, past, present, and future. We're pleased this issue to feature the return of our exclusive Show-By-Show Guide to *Rod Serling's Night Gallery*, by Kathryn M. Drennan and J. Michael Straczynski, which explains how Serling's second fantasy series became reality. Straczynski also continues his "Return of the Zone" feature on the creation of the new syndicated series. And, in a deeply personal interview, Peter Straub reveals how the dreams, and nightmares, of the past few years finally took shape in his new psychological thriller *Koko*.

As the beautiful semi-metallic woman on our cover suggests, several works of fiction in this issue are future dreams. Frederik Pohl, Hugo and Nebula Award-winning author of *Gateway* and *Chernobyl*, provides a powerful tale of the perils of mankind's search for other-than-human intelligence. Pohl's latest novel (with Jack Williamson) is *Land's End*, from Tor Books (in hardcover). Reginald Bretnor, who last appeared in TZ with "Dream Along with Me" (January 1982), explores how far one man will go to unlock the secrets of the universe. And Richard Paul Russo offers a poignant tale of a star pilot stranded forever on Earth. Fittingly enough, our classic TZ Teleplay by Rod Serling, "The Lateness of the Hour," also touches on the limits of human invention, and the fine line between the artificial and the real.

Because this issue will reach you just before the holidays, we've included, as always, some distinctly different Christmas stories as well. J. N. Williamson, author of *Dead to the World* (Leisure Books), contributes a chilling little fable of Christmas Present, entitled "You'd Better Watch Out." And our TZ First this issue is actually four terrifying holiday shortstories by author Alan Spero. Although these are Spero's first works to see print, he's actually written horror short stories professionally already. How's that possible? Spero was the originator of the very first "dial-a-horror" phone line, Tales of Terror, back in 1986, and was responsible for the fabled "Freddy Phone Line" (Freddy Krueger's Favorite Bedtime Stories) last year. By day, Spero works as a writer/producer for HBO, Cinemax, and the CBS Evening News, and is currently developing original programs in the horror genre. "I'm especially attracted to the shortstory form," writes Spero, "because the effect is so immediate and pure. I believe firmly in the old adage that 'less is more.'"

To keep you in the holiday spirit, this issue also features a special Twilight Zone Christmas Quiz by Jennifer Steinhauer, and a bonus Holiday Gifts Section, which includes Ed Bryant's recommendations for holiday giving, as well as a special catalog of Truly Weird Gifts, compiled by Jillian Smith. Smith is a journalism intern from Rod Serling's alma mater, Antioch College.

We hope you like your Christmas presents this year. But if something other than Santa comes down the chimney this time around—don't blame us! Happy holidays!



Frederik Pohl



Richard Paul Russo



Alan Spero

EDITOR'S NOTES

Inspiration

Of you look up the word *inspiration* in a good dictionary, you'll discover a very curious thing—it means, literally, *breathing in*. That's a clue that creativity is not as mysterious a process as it's made out to be. In a very real sense, it's as natural as breathing.

When I was a student at Antioch College, my poetry teacher was a marvelous, magical man named Alastair Reid; a ruddy, elfin man with a merry twinkle in his eye and soft, Scottish burr in his speech. Alastair Reid understood the process of inspiration in a way few men do. Not only was he a gifted poet himself, but he'd been a personal secretary to Robert Graves, and had translated into English the brilliantly surreal writings of the Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges. And yet, when he came to speak to us of inspiration, he began by making fun of it.

"Writing's not at all the way it looks in those awful movies," he said. "There's Lord Byron in his garret with a quill pen, pacing back and forth, and suddenly he'll stop and—*crash!*—he'll strike himself on the brow, and begin scribbling furiously. I'm afraid it doesn't work like that," he said with a smile. "For one thing, it would be awfully hard on the head after a while..."

Alastair Reid taught me that when a good—or even a great idea comes along, it often happens quietly, naturally, and almost always in the course of working away steadily, in a methodical, if uninspired fashion. You'll be going along, filling in familiar territory. Then you'll get stuck, your mind will wander for a moment or two, and then, when you turn your eyes back to your work, the answer is there, right in front of you. You know it's the right answer instantly, just because it *feels right*. The spirit moves you. (The Latin word for breathing, *spirare*, also gave us the word "spirit," by the way.)

But it's not enough just to catch the spark. It has to be nurtured and developed, built into a flame, and then a fire. For some of us, it's all too easy to just let it burn brightly for a moment, like a new-struck match, and then let it go out. To tell a friend or two about it, to show how clever you are, and then to let your divine spark expire.

But an even greater tragedy is when a truly inspired idea is put out, like a candle in a gale, before it ever has a chance to grow. All of us are subjected to a host of forces that can keep a dream from blossoming. The pressures of work, of family, of time, the doubts of others, and, worst of all, our own self-doubts.

When that divine wind blows through you, stop a moment and feel its passage. When you know it's right, cherish that spark. Gather around you the tinder you'll need to make it grow—the knowledge of how to make that dream into reality, the tools to do the job, step by step, and, perhaps most important, friends who believe in your dream as much as you do, and will help you keep it alive.



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LETTERS

AS A LAPSED (NON-PRACTICING) BUT STILL religious Catholic and card-carrying Irish-American, I must say that I found your August 1988 issue especially provocative entertainment. Wade Davis's views on so-called "primitive" religious practices being just as valid as established Western religions were certainly an eye-opener. Since I am an inveterate reader of horror stories, I must admit I side with fellow Irishman Michael Galloghach ("All in a Day's Work") on the existence of demons over the opinions of Father Andrew Greeley in "Dinner with an Angel" when he says they don't exist. However, my parochial school upbringing taught me long ago it's unwise to argue with a Jesuit. Thanks very much for a heavenly issue! I look forward to the next one!

M. FLYNN
Chicago, IL

NOT TOO LONG AGO I PICKED UP A COPY OF *Twilight Zone* and really enjoyed it. (I had bought one of your 1981 issues from a comics dealer once, but I didn't think you still published.) After searching around for the next issue without much luck, I decided to subscribe and insure that I never missed one. While I was at it I bought some of your binders so I can begin my TZ collection in earnest. So far I'm very satisfied—with the binders and the magazine!

ART LEVANDOSKI
Peckville, PA

I RECENTLY PICKED UP YOUR MAGAZINE and found it, to say the very least, one of the best science fiction magazines I've ever read. Your publication is definitely one that deserves the right—and honor—to call itself *The Twilight Zone*.

I believe the reason science fiction attracts such a large audience has to do with the human species' need to fantasize—to dream. We are the only species that can "pretend" and we have an instinctual need to express that ability. I think the "mission" of science fiction writing is to push the readers' imaginations to the edge of reality and beyond. A mission that, in my opinion, your magazine is carrying out beautifully.

STEFAN DENSMORE
Loveland, OH



TRUE-BLUE VOODOO: Wade "Serpent and Rainbow" Davis.

I JUST FINISHED READING EDWARD BRYANT'S review of Stephen King's *The Tommyknockers* (August 1988), and I applaud his insight. I'm always impressed by Mr. Bryant's ability to take note of certain details and underlying meanings that had escaped me completely. I owe him thanks for the many times he managed to enlighten me.

Of course, I don't *always* agree with

his reviews, but I find them "right on the money" most times (even his mixed feelings about King's *IT*).

Personally, I've been hooked on King's books since the first one I opened. What a creative and imaginative mind he has! (Incidentally, I found myself drawn to Dean Koontz's books when I discovered his style is so much like King's.)

Anyway, thanks for your fine magazine, and for your intelligent and thoughtful reviews of my personal "literary hero," Stephen King. I hope you go monthly!

PAMELA H. WITZEL
Pittsburgh, PA

TO SPLAT OR NOT TO SPLAT

I REALLY ENJOYED "INSIDE THE NEW HORROR" by Philip Nutman in the October '88 issue of TZ. I think the term "Splat-terpunk" is great, and truly an appropriate nickname for the New Horror.

Nutman's history of how we came to the Splatpunk could have been a little more accurate, however. He credits movies of the seventies, the end of the Age of Aquarius and the Vietnam war as influences, but doesn't mention Stephen King. Let's face it: no one can talk about modern horror without mentioning King. He changed the way we read and view horror today. He may seem tame beside the "Splat Pack," but his stories have to be considered as the ground breakers for New Horror. Clive Barker also has to be considered a catalyst for the New Horror. *The Books of Blood* made everyone sit up and pay attention to where the horror genre was going. He not only broke taboos—he blew them away.

Not everyone will approve of the Splatterpunks, but horror fans like myself feel they are another legitimate extension of the field. Without a certain amount of shock, horror loses its punch. So hail to the New Age of Horror! May it entertain us as well as make you squirm.

Id also like to credit the small press, who deserve a lot of praise from fans of horror today. Without them, much of the New Horror would be left on the desks of mainstream editors.

LEONARD J. DeVULDER
Thunder Bay, ONT

UNTIL THE ADVENT OF THE SPLATTERPUNKS, I found nothing in the horror genre that could evoke emotion from me, besides a titter here and a ho-hum there. But with the invasion of these daring writers I find my emotions reeling and now have many nights of disrupted sleep. And I must say I wouldn't mind running into any of these men in the midnight hour—especially Skipp and Spector!

STEEL DERRINGER
Pt. Collins, CO

THE ARTICLE ON THE NEW HORROR HAD one mistake. The Dead Kennedys (RIP) aren't from England, they're from California. PUNK'S NOT DEAD!

LENORE ANN
Commack, NY

I am a graduate student in English at UCLA. My thesis is on the subject of contemporary horror, so it was with a great deal of professional interest that I read Phil Nutman's article. Unfortunately, it seemed less an intelligent analysis of a current trend within the genre than a superficial overview of the work of a few hot young writers. This would not ordinarily move me to respond, but some of Nutman's conclusions and generalizations seem to me to be way off the mark.

The idea that violence and aggressiveness in rock originated with the punk movement of the late seventies, or, indeed, that such attitudes reached their peak at that time reveals an ignorance of the rock tradition. In the midst of the Age of Aquarius, Pete Townsend was smashing his guitar in concert and fighting with members of the audience. Iggy Stogee was cutting himself on stage. This aggression reached its apex in the mid-seventies with the "shock rock" of Alice Cooper, who also incorporated many elements of horror into both his music and live shows.

I would also like to point out that

Nutman's description of Splatterpunk novels as "narratives that are played out to the 4-4 beat of rock 'n' roll, the flickering rhythms of inner-city movie palaces" can also be applied to Stephen King's extremely cinematic and fast-paced *Salem's Lot*, which was written in the mid-seventies.

As for the "next wave" of horror writers, while the names listed by Nutman are all competent practitioners of their craft, there are several young authors whose work I find far more interesting, original, and disturbing than those listed, among them Kevin J. Anderson, Poppy Z. Brite, Elizabeth Massie and, in particular, the extraordinary Bentley Little.

JAMES F. FANTINO
Los Angeles, CA

Unfortunately, we weren't able to present as detailed an analysis of influences on the New Horror as we would have liked. In fact, Phil Nutman's article had to be abridged a bit for space requirements. The majority of the omissions and errors are the responsibility of the editors. Stephen King is certainly the central figure in the development of the "New Horror." Credit should also be given to Kirby McCauley's groundbreaking anthology Dark Forces which demonstrated both the range and literary quality of contemporary horror writing. ED.

LEST WE FORGET, THE "SPLATTERBOYS" ARE just following Stephen King's advice of what to do when all else fails—go for the gross-out. I don't mean this in a derogatory way. It may be the only way to break through the leather-tough hides that most of us have grown in order to survive in the eighties.

But as a bona fide splatterpotato, I have to say "Wait!" I've been scared like this before. Somehow Richard Laymon's *Out Are the Lights* and *Night Show* slipped by unnoticed—or most of the people who read his work died from

CONTINUED ON PAGE 93

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ILLUMINATIONS

SERLING STAR UPDATE

Hollywood entered the Twilight Zone at precisely 6:39 p.m. on Thursday, October 6, at ceremonies dedicating a star in honor of Rod Serling on the fabled Hollywood Walk of Fame. The atmosphere was one of celebration, tribute, and nostalgia as over three hundred friends, colleagues, and admirers gathered on Hollywood Boulevard at twilight for the unveiling of the star. Present were staff of the original *Twilight Zone* series, writers, and actors, as well as those involved with the 1985-86 CBS-TV revival and writers and producers of the new syndicated *Twilight Zone* series. After Carol Serling unveiled the gleaming bronze star, and those who had known and respected Serling spoke of his life and legacy, the guests adjourned to the nearby club "Hollywood Live" for a festive reception sponsored by MGM/UA Telecommunications, syndicator of the new series.

An in-depth, exclusive report on the event, featuring exclusive photographs, will appear in the next *TZ*.



T.E.D. KLEIN



PHOTO BY SARA RISHIER

HORROR OF HORRORS

In the December 1987 issue of *Twilight Zone Magazine*, Esther M. Friesner wrote a tongue-in-cheek "how to" article on horror writing ("Now Revealed: Money-making Secrets of the Shock-meisters"). Now someone has finally gone and done it for real. Bill Munster's Footsteps Press is coming out with a special edition chapbook of *Raising Goosebumps for Fun and Profit*, written

by none other than *Twilight Zone Magazine's* founding editor—and bestselling author of *Ceremonies* and *Dark Gods*—T.E.D. Klein. This limited edition contains a lengthy essay by Ted built around his expanded list of "The Twenty-three Most Familiar Horror Plots." The book is also full of dozens of original illustrations by Peter Kuper, whose expressive work has appeared in *Heavy Metal*, *The New York Times*, and *Time* magazine. (His

collected artwork appears in *New York, New York*, published by Fantagraphics Books.) Each of the five hundred editions of *Raising Goosebumps for Fun and Profit* (forty-eight pages long) will be signed by the author. They run \$13.95 plus \$2.00 shipping, from Footsteps Press (Box 75, Round Top, New York 12473). It looks like fun, but remember, at a mere five hundred copies printed, you'd better hurry if you want one.

PLEASANT PLEASANCE

Meet a nice guy. Donald Pleasance.

Oh, sure...this same pale-eyed actor has been responsible for some of the best-chilled shudders that ever spilled off a movie screen. He portrayed James Bond's arch enemy, Blofeld, in *You Only Live Twice*, and the psychotic preacher in the title role of *Will Penny*, and the beady-eyed kidnapper in *Escape to Witch Mountain*.

He played the psychiatrist on the track of the boogeyman in *Halloween*, and the priest who confronts the devil with the latest in scientific gadgetry in *Prince of Darkness*—good-guy roles, yes, but creepy good guys.

Yet, despite all this, Pleasance would like it known that he is...well, a sweetheart, a softie, and he can prove it.

"I don't think I look particularly mean," he said. "I'm really quite pleasant."

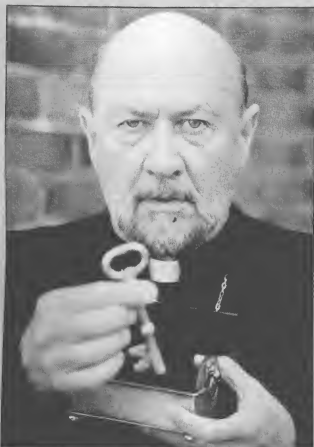
As proof, he is the author of two published children's books about the adventures of a mouse: *Scouse the Mouse* and *Scouse the Mouse in New York*.

"I used to tell these stories to my youngest child, Miranda," Pleasance said. "She was seven or eight at the time. She's seventeen now, and I thought I might as well see if I could get them published."

More than published, Pleasance's mouse stories are being made into an animated cartoon feature for television in England. Ringo Starr will be the voice of Scouse ▶

ILLUMINATIONS

PHOTO © 1987 UNIVERSAL CITY STUDIOS



the mouse and Pleasence will be the narrator.

"I don't particularly like playing bad guys. It's just that I find myself doing it from time to time," he said.

With a background of Shakespearean stage work, he won the London Critics award for his performance in Harold Pinter's play, *The Caretaker*, and the British Variety Award as best actor in Robert Shaw's *The Man in the Glass Booth*.

He admits he is probably best known for "this beady-eyed business" of being one of the world's great evil-doers. He's not the first ac-

tor to be so perceived. "I always thought Charles Laughton was a better comic actor than he was a heavy," Pleasence says. "But people still remember him as Captain Bligh."

So, how about giving the man some credit for being a good guy once in a while?

"I was the hero in *Halloween II*," Pleasence points out. "I gave up my life, I got burned to death to save Jamie Lee Curtis. I flicked my Bic. Remember?"

You don't? Ah well, you were probably distracted by that "beady-eyed" look. . . .

—Ron Wolfe

ZZZZ-ZZZ-ZZ-ZZ

Here is what Alan Caruba has to say about half-or-so of Stephen King's horror novels: *Zzz-zz-z!*

"About every other book he turns out is pretty bad," Caruba said, sounding his Snore Alarm at yet another source of what bores him. "But people don't want to say, 'Look, the man is foisting junk on us.'"

Here is what Caruba, as the president and founder of The Boring Institute of Maplewood, New Jersey, has to say about Clive Barker's best-selling horror novel, *The Damnation Game*: *ZZZ-zz-z!*

"It's a boring muddle," he said, not that he limits himself to picking on horror writers.

Joan Rivers is boring, in Caruba's (yawn. . .!) estimation. Andy Rooney is a major bore. X-rated movies are boring. Bowling on TV "virtually defies any kind of intelligent commentary," and TV in general is what boredom is all about.

"Boredom is when you set-

tle into a little niche in your life, and you close all the doors and all you do is watch that stupid television," Caruba said.

Say, who is this guy that he should be having so much to say?

"Someone has to stand up and say how bad things are," Caruba said. The job was open, so he took it.

Caruba is a public relations man in New Jersey—and a man with "a low threshold of boredom. I'd seen so many boring news releases, I decided to put one out," he said.

He founded the mock-serious Boring Institute three years ago as an official-sounding source of boring news, and the joke caught on. Caruba's list of "The Most Boring Celebrities of the Year" is a national news event. He wrote a book, too: *Boring Stuff: How to Spot It & How to Avoid It*.

"I found there is a very negative, a dark side to boredom," he said. "The great problem with boredom is that it's just this side of depression."

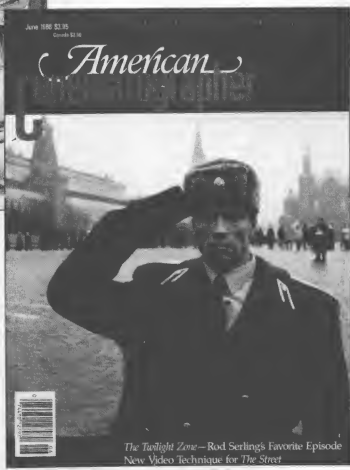
—Ron Wolfe





WHAT'S UTNE?

For those of you who need more of the weird and wonderful, there's the *Utne Reader*, "the best of the alternative press." It's a bimonthly magazine that's sort of a *Reader's Digest* of the strange. Published by Lens Publishing Co., *Utne* (rhymes with chutney), is a cross between *The Twilight Zone* and *The Whole Earth Catalog*; full of down-to-earth wonkiness. Oh, in case you wondered, "Utne" means "far out" in Norwegian.



ZONEMATOGRAPHER

Just when you thought it was safe to read a dry, technical, authoritative behind-the-scenes movie magazine like *American Cinematographer*, they do an article that seems like it would be right at home in these pages. "Walking Distance" From *The Twilight Zone*, in their June 1988 issue, delves into the making of Rod Serling's favorite episode. Suddenly it seems like everyone is in on the act.

BOOKS

EDWARD BRYANT

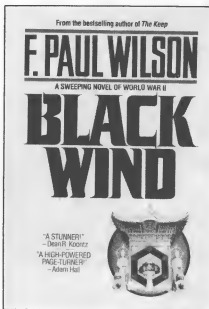
Foreign Fantasy, Psychological Horror, and other strange visions

It's always a pleasure watching a talented and deserving writer move from "nowhere" to the small time, then climb to the big time, finally attempting the daring leap to the level where Waldenbooks and B. Dalton's put your novels in neat pyramids right in the showroom window.

After writing three comparatively little-noticed science fiction novels for Doubleday, F. Paul Wilson's career took a quantum-level jump when he devised the sure-fire high-concept plot, "the Nazis meet Dracula." The result was *The Keep*. That summary doesn't do justice to Wilson's eerie fantasy novel, but it's the sort of short-hand thinking on the part of Hollywood moguls that led to the book's becoming a flashy, but empty, big-budget movie directed by Michael (Miami Vice) Mann.

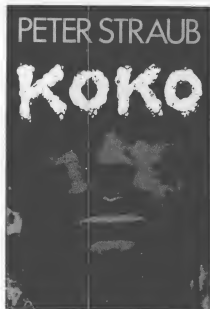
Wilson followed his immense exposure via *The Keep* with *The Tomb* and *The Touch*. Now he's treading real bestseller ground with *Black Wind* (Tor, \$18.95, 480 pp., ISBN 0-312-93064-X). *Black Wind* qualifies for the multi-generational Japanese/American epic novel sweepstakes. Take Richard McGill's *Omamori* or just about anything by Eric Van Lustbader, add a dash of dark fantasy in the form of a horrendous occult weapon owned and operated once, then lost and now sought again, by a sect of sinister Japanese monks, and you've got the surface of Wilson's book.

So is it nothing but summer beach reading? Well, it is definitely a page-turner. It is a wonderful potpourri of childhood friendships lost and renewed, hairbreadth escapes and insanely convoluted plot developments, astonishing revelations and mistaken identities resolved by family birthmarks. It's got sex (well, one good, effective scene) and violence (lots of the martial-arts variety). Finally, the plot hinges on



Cassandran visions.

Black Wind begins in 1926 and ends, not surprisingly at all, in August 1945. Frankie and Matsuo are boy chums in San Francisco. Matsuo is the younger son of a powerful Japanese noble and political player, who has foreseen the coming economic war between America and Japan and has sent his boy to grow up with the adversary. Hiroki, Matsuo's older brother, is spending his time being trained by the Kakureta Kao, an order of monks whose grotesque discipline of mutilation allows them some psychic vision of the future. The monks have also once been guardians of a hideous secret weapon, but lost the means of triggering it centuries before in the Emperor's struggle with the Shogunate. Part of the contemporary plot is the ongoing search for the scrolls that will offer up the secret to setting loose the deadly *Black Wind*.

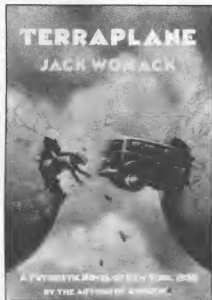


In the meantime, there's the matter of Frankie's cowardice when Matsuo's life is endangered; the subsequent return of Matsuo to Japan accompanied by his sensei, Nagata; the escalating tension between the brothers; Matsuo's falling in love with Meiko, the exquisite young woman betrothed to Hiroki; the political machinations as Japan is seized by nationalism; Frankie's maturing and joining U.S. Naval Intelligence; the dawn of World War II and the bombing of Pearl Harbor, etc. You get the idea. It all makes for diverting reading.

But again, is it all fun and games? Three important elements keep Wilson's novel from sinking under its own weight back into the same gray ocean of best-selling pulp. First, he's done his homework. *Black Wind* contains fascinating speculation about the sociopolitical forces that molded Japan. Additionally the novel addresses, if a bit circumspectly,

BOOKS

the suspicious circumstances of how it was that Pearl Harbor was caught totally unaware that Sunday dawn, December 7 (this is not the George Bush version), 1941. The author's suggestions do not reflect well on Franklin D.



Roosevelt. Second, Paul Wilson rarely forgets that his Japanese characters are not Americans. His depiction of Japan-in-charge is a portrait of a different culture—the codes and behavior of which come across as sufficiently alien to Western sensibilities. Finally, Wilson cleverly sets us up to swallow the endless melodramatic conventions of coincidence and pell-mell plot actions by suggesting that a larger plan is at work, that some sort of cosmic players are manipulating the characters and their lives. Neat trick. Enjoyable book.

Just don't expect a history text.

Speaking of history, it's being addressed in vastly different ways in two fascinating new novels. One is Peter Straub's latest, *Koko* (Dutton, \$19.95, 576 pp., ISBN 0-525-24660-6). This is a massive and reasonably complex account of guilt and psychopathology, taking as its core a handful of surviving Viet vets whose outfit was involved in a My Lai-ish atrocity. Set a decade and a half after the end of America's involvement in the Vietnam War, *Koko* begins at the unveiling of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, DC. Michael Poole is a decent and reasonably well-adjusted "baby-doctor" whose marriage is in trouble. He's in DC for the dedication ceremonies and to meet a handful of his old war buddies: feisty Conlink Lorkater, Manhattan restaurateur Tina Pumo, and his old lieutenant, Harry "Beans"

Beever, a truly wretched excuse for a second loonie. Through chance or design, these men are survivors. And one of their reasons for meeting is not just to drink Jack Daniels and weep at the long black wall, but to consider the matter of reports flowing out of Southeast Asia about a psychotic serial killer who calls himself "Koko" and leaves a playing card at the scene of his butchery. This last is revealed gradually as the *modus operandi* of something the men's old outfit was involved in. Is one of their old comrades Koko and still alive? Is Koko one of their own? Or indeed, is he one of *them*? Beever thinks so—and he's hellbent on tracking Koko down. Glory and riches will result. The other men become caught up in Beever's quest—but for their own reasons.

Ultimately Koko is, of course, like so much other post-Vietnam fiction, about human time bombs. Its strength is its recognition and treatment of how permeating the effects of war can be, and how the trauma follows human lives down all the years. As the horror at first subtly, then overtly, twists the souls of the characters, it's difficult not to be caught up in the intrinsic human drama of what Straub is delineating. This drama tends generally to overcome Straub's frequent tendency toward diffuseness in his writing. The author has a fine depth and breadth in his literary upbringing and he never lets us forget it. Occasionally that dilutes the power of his subject matter.

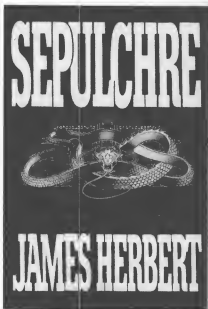
But most of the time, Straub does just fine at reminding us that war is hell. And that peace can be just a more lingering and complex version of that hell.

There's a less direct, but in some ways an equally biting view of history in Jack Womack's second novel, *Terraplane* (Weidenfeld & Nicholson, \$17.95, 201 pp., ISBN 1-55584-165-1). Womack is someone whose novels thus far are what most observers might label science fiction. Much like Steve Erickson (*Days Between Stations, Rubicon Beach*), Womack has avoided being tarred with the sf brush. Only a few of the faithful have discovered him, and presumably his mainstream readership simply considers his work to be just something more entertainingly and weirdly askew than, say, Bret Easton Ellis or Jay McInerney.

Womack's first novel, *Ambient* (1987), was an off-center futuristic drama that seemingly derived from such diverse ancestors as Raymond Chandler's *roman noir* sensibility and Russell Hoban's projected future-speak (as in

Riddley Walker). *Terraplane*, if one wishes to look for familiar referents, is a bit of a melange of Russell Hoban and Howard Waldrop. That's not a bad mixture. The Hoban ingredient is Womack's return to extrapolating the evolved pop technotalk of the Twenty-first century. The comparison to Waldrop is a reference to the author's inventive, esoteric, wacko approach to both the projected history of the next century, and an alternate world view of depression America, New York City, and the bright future-promise of the 1939 World's Fair.

Womack drops us right into the thick of things in a hideously amusing next-century Soviet Union saturated with hyper-capitalism. We meet Jack and Luther, two American operatives attempting to consummate a deal to obtain a kidnapped scientist. There are double and triple crosses galore, and the guys find themselves hurled back through parallel time streams to 1939 America (New Jersey, to be exact). They, along with a young Russian woman, Oktobriana, are rescued by a Harlem physician named Doc, and are set on the course of discovering just how complicated their lot has become.



I won't tell you of the author's speculation about Nikola Tesla and the true natures of the Trylon and Perisphere. That you'll have to find out for yourself. Suffice it to say that, with the exception of its abrupt and rushed ending, *Terraplane* is a caustically amusing romp. I hope its audience will find it. The search is well worth the effort.

Chet Williamson continues to evolve into one of today's finest horror writers.

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SCREEN

GAHAN WILSON

Why scary movies don't frighten us nowadays.

Way back when, in a time called the Fifties (which we presently idolize), the citizens of the United States of America experienced a sustained, severe political repression; accepted with pathetic docility a god-awful, misery-producing, neo-Victorian societal etiquette, and wore possibly the ugliest clothes ever sold in the precincts of our nation. Back then, there were also a host of movies about Evil Beasts menacing us from outer space—possibly because we were desperate for an alternative, *any* alternative.

The Beasts were, by and large, very like one another: They put one in mind of Communists because of their chill, unfriendly way. (We were, at the time, enthusiastically engaged in the Cold War.) They mostly arrived in disk-shaped ships. (The Flying Saucer phenomenon was in its Early Menace stage.) But the thing that unified them all, even those most cleverly conceived, was the obvious fact that underneath their insectoid or reptilian skins, they were really a kind of human being after all. They might have fancier gadgets. Their reproductive methods might be very unlike our simple, down-home ways. They certainly were *smarter* than we were, but when you cut through all the superficial stuff, you could see that, underneath it all, they were behaving exactly as we would if we'd landed on another planet—namely, we'd squeeze as much profit out of it as we could, and try to bully the natives into accepting our way of life. Deep down inside they were just people, only a little meaner and with a high-tech edge.

Then, in 1958, *The Blob* arrived on our drive-in screens and changed all of that because there was nothing—absolutely nothing—human about it. Scientists didn't even try to communicate with it. Priests could not talk to it of God. One look and generals knew in

their heart of hearts that it believed in no political system whatsoever because all it was, *whatever* it was, was a great big lump of red Jello that ate people.

True, it was a lump of red Jello that moved a trifle awkwardly at times and had a little trouble getting around. And, every so often, if you were a stuffed shirt and party pooper and looked at it skeptically, you might see it actually *was* only red Jello or Silly Putty or something else mundane being pushed at a brave but frightened Steve McQueen by someone hidden off camera. (But if you were silly enough to do that it was *your* problem.) The rest of

us were having a swell time screaming away like crazy because we'd happily bought the idea that the wiggly red thing really *was* a whatsis and were enjoying having the shit scared out of us.

Now, here in the Eighties (which ninnies of the future will also get all choked up and sentimental about, you may be sure) a new version of *The Blob* (Tri-Star) has appeared which employs, ingeniously and lavishly, all the vast advances in special effects developed since those far-off, ghastly days of the Fifties. This modern Blob is no mere wudge of shimmering red gorp looking all too often like it slopped from baby's bowl,



MELLOW JELLO: Shawnee Smith runs from the Eighties Blob.

PHOTO © 1988 TRI-STAR PICTURES

nossir. This Blob is *alive*, friends, and it grabs and digests and otherwise carries on like that dear old Blob of yesteryear never could, in even its wildest dreams.

Like its granddaddy, it shifts shape constantly and its next form is ever unpredictable. But it is blessed with a rich range of choice totally denied its ancestor: It can be a translucent slime one minute, sheeting a screaming, melting victim; the next minute it can take on a writhing complexity full of independently moving detail. In these latter forms, the Blob suggests, essentially, an enormous set of bowels on the prowl, with the eating appendages of simpler sea creatures—tentacles and clutching tendrils and such—tacked on as needed. The effect at times is highly Lovecraftian and, for me, pleasantly evocative of shuggoths. I recommend it highly to scholars in the field.

As in the original *Blob*, the field of the monster's activities is a little town and its environs, chock-full of middle-class period Americana. It is updated from the Fifties to the Eighties to a degree, but that is not as hard a job as it might seem at first glance, since the Eighties, in many rather depressing ways, are a kind of rerun of the Fifties (as the Nineties probably shall be of the Sixties and so on). The essential characters have more or less the same function as their Fifties counterparts, though there are interesting differences. The original Young Rebel (Steve McQueen), spent a lot of his time in anguished struggle with his family. The new Rebel, played by Kevin Dillon, has long since given up on his folks and wandered off on his own. The plot of the new *Blob* also features an initially credible but increasingly mad minister, spinning off a rather cute side plot, which is also quite Lovecraftian in its cynical implications as to Mankind and the Cosmos. Once again, we find out that the people running our society are as stupid and irresponsible as we hope they really aren't. So the Eighties *Blob* reflects a time which is a good deal more tired and far less hopeful than its predecessor's era, though possibly a tad more willing—and perhaps even able—to change for the better.

Chuck Russell, the director and (along with Frank Darabont) writer has had a lot of fun and done some very clever things in taking off and elaborating on the sequences and notions of the original movie (although he kills off the two most interesting characters too soon). And though there is no way on Earth a remake can have the same impact as the original did, I (and every-

body else watching the movie with me) had a swell time getting another look at one of our great national myths in action. I couldn't help, now and then, thinking what would have happened if this much more grisly and technically superior version had been released in the Fifties instead of its relatively tame original. It would, dear readers, have blown our innocent minds.

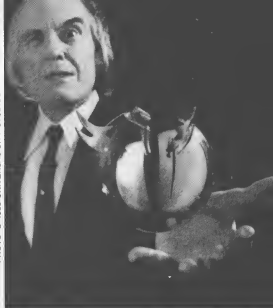
Phantasm II (Universal), written and directed by Don Coscarelli, is, like its low-budget predecessor *Phantasm*, an unabashedly ghoulish romp which, I'll be so bold to say, probably evokes the spirit and style of the old EC fast-food horror comic books of the aforementioned Fifties as well or better than anything that's come along since. Coscarelli has the same schoolyard relish of the gruesome, the same romping lack of inhibition which set those lovely, tawdry publications so far apart from the relatively respectable competition, and which have made *Tales from the Crypt* and EC's other flagship magazines prize collectors' items among warped aficionados of the genre to this day.

Of course that does decidedly not mean that the *Phantasms* are for everybody, since, God knows, the EC comics were so emphatically not for everybody that they ended up spurring the forces of law and order to ban horror comics altogether, and it took years for any imitators even a tiny bit in the ghastly old tradition to manage to sneak back onto the stands. My guess is that society at large has degenerated to the point where it's unlikely that *Phantasms I* and *II* will inspire a similar general ban, but it won't be for lack of trying. Apparently Coscarelli has been viewing this project as a trilogy all along (how about that, George Lucas?) and we can confidently expect, God help the innocent children, a *III*!

Phantasm II's imagery is wonderfully crude and bold and comic-book throughout. There are the pretty mirrored balls which fly through mausoleum halls bearing drills and hooks to dig holes in your forehead and spurt out your blood, the little killing people which are made from compacted corpses (don't ask me why the fiendish aliens need to squish 'em in order to make 'em work), and the grim, horribly unsatisfactory father-figure of the dour and towering Angus Scrimm as the Tall Man—with his Caddy hearse and his old-timey high black shoes.

At times all of these images look to me like they were actually drawn by retired—or dead—cartoonists. Sometimes I can swear I almost see a cap-

PHOTO © 1988 UNIVERSAL CITY STUDIOS



EC RIDER: *Phantasm II*'s Tall Man shows his sphere of influence.

tioned balloon floating up in a corner of the screen, particularly during moments such as the one where one of the characters, facing a huge graveyard full of nothing but neat, exactly parallel, six-foot-deep holes, cries out something like: "LOOK! (GASP!) THEY'VE STOLEN ALL THE BODIES!!!" The simple plot of the present epic (two guys and a gal gear themselves up with every weapon they can buy and improve upon and set out to erase the necromancers) does nothing to minimize these illusions. It even encourages another, more subtle one: a faint, ghostlike taste which reminds me of one of those chocolate peppermint sodas I used to consume in the Evanshire drugstore while sitting conveniently by the comic book rack.

The best part about the *Phantasms* is that you can finally see for yourself what you always suspected when you were a kid in grade school. It's all there, the unvarnished truth about what they do to dead bodies. You can see every awful thing you heard in frightened whispers in dark October afternoons, from how they sew your lips up after they've embalmed you so that you can never ever open your mouth again, all the way up to verifying, right up there on the screen in full color, right before your very eyes, the awful fact that undertakers take icky green stuff out of dead bodies with horrible, long needles and then lovingly suck it down. So now you know for sure.

A Nightmare on Elm Street 4: The Dream Master (New Line), herein to be referred to as *Freddy 4*, continues the uneven saga of Freddy Krueger, the monster who, when his ugly career as a molester and slaughterer of children was abruptly terminated by fire, transformed himself into a clever and unique ghost who made it his business to for-

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Terence Knox stars in Alan Brennert's adaptation of Tom Godwin's classic sf story *THE COLD EQUATIONS*.

RETURN OF THE ZONE

CHAPTER THREE

ARTICLE BY
J. MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI

TZ3 UPDATE

AT 5:30 P.M. ON SUNDAY, AUGUST 7, THE VOTE WAS tallied and the twenty-two-week strike by the Writers Guild of America came to a long-overdue conclusion. The next day, I returned to work as sole story editor on *The Twilight Zone*. As I write these words, we are frantically trying to make up for lost time. To accommodate that, I've written two original scripts in two days ("The Mind of Simon Foster" and "Rendezvous in a Dark Place"), revised another original script approved just prior to the strike ("The Wall"), have just finished revising Marty Pasko and Becky Parr's script for "A Private Place," based on a short story by Lawrence Watt-Evans, will write another original script tomorrow ("Something in the Walls"), do some last-minute revisions on Haskell Barkin's "Appointment on Route 17," edit Christy Marx's "Cat and Mouse," and then write another original outline.

Just in case you wondered what the heck it is we do at these jobs.

One new event to report: due to the strike, an episode was needed to fill in a gap in the production schedule. Since no new scripts could be purchased, series producer Mark Shermidine decided to remake an original *Twilight Zone* episode, "A Game of Pool," since it was already owned by CBS. We're keeping certain aspects of this under wraps (including a possible surprise bit of casting, and a surprise at the end), but you can expect to find out the Real Story here first, as soon as it's available for release.

Meanwhile, new casting has been set for other episodes, including: Michael Moriarity in "20/20 Vision," a story about consequences finally perceived, written by Robert Walden (known to most from his role as Joe Rossi on *Lou Grant*) and directed by Jim Purdy. Terri Garber (from *North and South* and *Dynasty*) has been set to star in "Our Selenia is Dying," story by Rod Serling, teleplay by J. Michael Straczynski, directed by Bruce Pittman. [See rest of article for further details.] Terence Knox (*St. Elsewhere* and *Tour of Duty*) will headline "The Cold Equations," teleplay by Alan Brennert, based on the famous sf short story by Tom Godwin, and directed by Martin Lavut.

"The Trance," a jaundiced look at the trance-channelling business written by Jeff Stuart and J. Michael Straczynski, will feature Peter Scolari (Michael on *Newhart*), in an episode directed by Randy Bradshaw. Melanie Mayron (Melissa on *thirtysomething*) stars in "Acts of Terror," a story about wife-beating in which an unexpected third party intervenes, written by J. Michael Straczynski, directed by Brad Turner. And Colleen Dewhurst will star in a gentle, moving story about an aging writer entitled "There Was an Old Woman," written by Tom Astle, directed by Otta Hanus.

Finally, we've set a final-definite-tenative-until-the-next-revision date for the debut of TZ3. If all goes according to plan, the first episodes should have appeared on a TV station near you the week of September 19. (In fact, by the weird time-warp logic of magazine publishing, you may have already seen at least eight TZ3 episodes by the time you read this; some barely completed as I write these words.)

Still, with the strike now over, and a new batch of scripts gearing up for production, the curtain has, at last, risen on the third act of *The Twilight Zone*.

From where I sit, it looks like it's gonna be a doozy.

SURPRISES UNLEASHED

THE LAST TIME WE GATHERED TOGETHER, IN THIS PLACE, WE LOOKED at the process by which the TZ3 team came together, the logistics involved, and the preliminary battles that needed fighting. Now we turn our attention to a slightly more subjec-

tive area—the personal and creative considerations involved in actually *writing* for a show like *The Twilight Zone*.

Start with "The Cold Equations."

We *knew* we were going to get nailed on that one. Tom Godwin's short story generated tremendous controversy when it first appeared in print in 1954, and now in 1988, it was doing so again. For those not familiar with this classic story of the sf genre (and shame on you!), the linchpin for the entire story is the decision by one of the characters to sacrifice her life for another, because the spacecraft they share only has fuel and life-support for one. In the logic of 1950s science fiction, this was heresy. No matter the odds, the reader was guaranteed that all characters would find a way to survive.

The studio executives came up with fixes designed to "repair" the ending—an ending which, in fact, is the very point of the story. Otherwise, why not call it "The Luke-warm Equations?"

Godwin's story says just the opposite, that there are equations which cannot be compromised; that space doesn't care how nice a person you are, or how innocent your intentions might be. You mess up—you pay the price.

And some studio executives didn't much like that idea. "Too grim," was the usual response. "Besides, if she dies, then the whole thing becomes predictable." We argued the contrary, that in fact people would be *expecting* her to be saved. That, after all, is TV Logic, which is still pretty close to Fifties Science Fiction Logic. Break the rule, surprise the audience.

But they continued to do what execs do best. They came up with "fixes" which they called in, or sent via memo, all designed to "repair" the ending of a short story that has been a classic in the sf genre for thirty-four years, an ending which, in point of fact, is the very point of the story—otherwise, why not call it "The Luke-warm Equations?"

"Okay, I've got a perfect fix on this," one exec said, very enthusiastically. "The ship lands, and we see her alive, in the doorway! And she moves out, and then we see the pilot sitting down—and we find out *he's cut his own legs off and jettisoned them in order to make up the difference in fuel, so she can stay on the ship!* What do you think?"

Our response, via Mark Shelmerdine, Producer: *The ending stays.*

"How about this," another exec suggested. "Instead of her walking out of the airlock on her own, the pilot turns around and blows her brains out! It's an agonizing decision for him to make, we see his grief, and we go on from there."

Our response: *The ending stays.*

An aside: In the Bible, there is a term used in Psalms. It

is *Selah*. It means, *Pause, and consider.*

Now, to all of you out there, looking in, pause and consider.

Do you *really* want to work in television?

EXPERIENCES SUCH AS THIS, THOUGH, WERE MORE THE EXCEPTION than the rule. Although the studio tried to become more involved in the stories midway through the writing season, for the first half we received little in the way of creative interference. Which is not to say there weren't other sources of problems.

Like that damn cat.

Two other writers had done a script in which a cat appeared—not so much in the story as in the background. Without paying much attention to it, I wrote a script a while later in which a cat also made two brief appearances (each appearance occupying only a few lines on the page, as it's being fed or napping). Well, when I finished my script, the other two writers got *very* upset, arguing that if my script had a cat in it, and *their* script had a cat in it, then the viewers *might think they were the same episode*—even though the cast was different, the locations and sets were different, and the story was different.

(I just report 'em, folks, I don't have to explain 'em.)

The argument raged. Memos flew back and forth. Meetings were held. Mark considered the problem with the attention of a Solomon. I suggested that he therefore slice the cat in half, and put one half in either episode. Surely no one would mistake the front half for the back half, and thereby no one would be confused or think they were seeing a repeat. For whatever reason, he didn't think this path worth following.

Finally, he said, "The cat stays."

Victory!

Until about a week later. I get a call from Canada. "We've got a problem. We've already cast the cat in the other episode."

"So?"

"So..." and they went on to explain that there are only two trained cats (or stunt cats, or whatever they're called) in Canada. And one of them was sick. Coughing. Looking a mite peaked. An entire *country* as wide across as the United States—and they've only got TWO CATS!

So now, when you see "The Call," the main character has—a hamster.

Selah.

In spite of such nonsense, however, spirits were generally riding high at TZ3. The scripts were looking good. Temperaments were meshing. The vision we had of the show was beginning to be realized in the stories we were getting. But the scripts coming in from outside weren't the only concern. We, who were inside, had an even greater responsibility to generate scripts that would shoot for the highest possible standards.

After all, if we were going to ask it from others, we'd darned well be prepared to deliver such quality ourselves, and then some. You talk the talk, you better walk the walk.

One of my earliest encounters with this problem was on my script for an episode titled, "Dream Me a Life." The basic setup of the story was as follows: an old man, in a retirement home, begins sharing a nightmare with another resident. In that nightmare, there is something behind a door, trying desperately (and, loudly, and dangerously) to get in. She pleads with him to help her, fearing that if it gets through, she'll die. The story, then, would wrap itself around the question, *What does he do about it?*

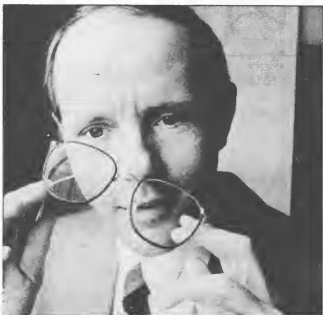
Which was all fine and dandy, except for one tiny thing:



William Sanderson ("Larry" on Newhart) and friend in THE CALL.



Award-winning actress Colleen Dewhurst plays a talented writer in THERE WAS AN OLD WOMAN.



Robert Walden ("Rossi" on Lou Grant) wrote the script for 20/20 VISION, starring Michael Moriarty (Holocaust).

I didn't have a clear vision of what was *behind* the door. In my original notes, it's An Awful, Terrible Thing, which the protagonist manages to destroy. It was okay, but frankly, it wasn't good enough. I stumbled around, tried to find something better. But every time, I kept coming back to the Terrible Something Trying To Get In that he had to destroy. That is to say, something predictable.

I was fast going totally out of my skull. I worried it day and night like a low-grade toothache.

Then, frankly, I tried a trick I use in times of serious block: reversals. What if it's a woman instead of a man? What if it's a police station instead of a retirement home? (Note: neither of these worked.) What if she's not trying to keep something out—

Wait. Stop.

Selah.

What if she's not trying to keep something out? WHAT IF SHE'S TRYING TO KEEP SOMETHING IN?

And in that flash of insight I suddenly *knew*, beyond a shadow of a doubt, what—or more precisely, *who*—was behind that door. Someone she didn't want to let go of. Someone important to her. Someone without whom she didn't think she could survive. A loved one. A *deceased* loved one.

I had my story.

And it became one of the best things I've ever written.

Not long after I'd gotten over that trauma, another came walking unexpectedly in through the front door.

Mark came into the back offices with a handful of type-written papers. "Just got some stories in the mail from someone I've been talking with," Mark said. "Do you think we ought to buy one of them?"

I glanced at the title page of one of them. It took a second for the writer's credit to register on my brain.

By ROD SERLING

Mark had gotten hold of outlines for three "lost" episodes of the original *Twilight Zone*, all written by Rod Serling, all three of them unproduced, and unfinished. (That is to say, they existed only in outline form—they had yet to be adapted to script.) They were anywhere from four to seven pages in length, and as far as we could tell had been written prior to the original *Zone's* cancellation, which is why they were never completed, left instead to languish in some dark file for nearly twenty-five years.

And now they had found their way into my hands—a greeting from Rod Serling across the years. Three new stories. *Submitted for your approval*. . . . In a way, it felt as though suddenly our presence on Serling's show had been validated, our prior status as interlopers repealed. He was there, among us, through the medium of the typewritten page.

We pored over the three outlines. One was titled "The Theatre," the other was "Osgood and the Warlock." They were fascinating and well-crafted stories, whose contents I'm not at liberty to divulge. Unfortunately, they required sets and effects well beyond our budget. Of the three, only one seemed workable.

It was entitled, "Our Selena is Dying." It began with the following words:

The Brockman mansion is a cheerless, dark, twenty-room brownstone (the last of its kind) on Beekman Street. It's an unkempt museum of uncomfortable straight-backed chairs and overstuffed sofas—its paneled walls, lusterless—as if polished by darkness, reflecting the somber shadows of the house, itself. . . .

The six-page outline then proceeded to introduce the residents of the Brockman mansion, carefully weaving a story about death and the extreme lengths some people will go

to in order to avoid the certain inevitability of death. The embodiment of this is Selena Brockman, who Serling describes in terms both chilling and wonderfully evocative:

And there is Selena, herself—the Grande Dame of the nagerie who lies in her four-poster in an inch-by-inch battle with death—trying somehow to reach a compromise instead of a capitulation—but each morning more and more hard-pressed to eke strength out of the frail, wasting seventy-five-year-old body, the used-up lungs, the once-regal, impervious spirit that now betrays her as she gradually slips away....

Later, Serling elaborates:

In the steel, ball-bearing eyes of Selena Brockman, is an unholy clutching of life that transcends either science or faith. In Diane [her niece] there is a quality of uncommon lust—lust that transcends the flesh and turns unspokenly inward toward something far more morbid and far less earthy. And as to the vacant Martha, Diane's mother, who sits at her accustomed place by the window, looking out, unseeing, at traffic and people far more flesh and blood than she—even this woman carries with her her own special enigma....



An unpublished Rod Serling outline provided the source for OUR SELENA IS DYING (starring Terri Garber).

It was spare, and tight, with almost no dialogue at all, just the basic structure of the story, often written in a kind of scatter-gun shorthand that conveyed the story in small explosions of characterization and action.

We bought it.

Then Mark called me into his office and said, "I want you to adapt it."

Oboy.

Understand: the chance to adapt an original, long-lost Rod Serling story is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, the high water mark in my career to this date. I was excited. I was thrilled.

I was scared stiff.

Because I knew that there would be a lot of publicity attendant upon this particular episode. Publicists and TV stations would proclaim, AFTER 25 YEARS, ROD SERLING RETURNS

TO THE TWILIGHT ZONE! Critics would watch. Fans of the show would watch. And comparisons would be inevitable. *How would Rod have handled this scene? Is the writing as crisp as Rod's? Did he blow it?*

If I write an original script, there are no expectations beyond a good story. Here, though, I would have to live up to the quality of Rod's scripts. If I couldn't deliver a script as good as Rod's might have been... if I failed to live up to the challenge... they would pound me into the pavement for the crime of hubris and delusions of adequacy.

Even beyond my own concerns, though, was the desire to do it right, out of respect for Serling's words and the show which I had inherited.

In preparing for the job, I read as much of Serling's work as I could—scripts, essays, stories, all of it—in an attempt to absorb the *sense* of his style without repeating phraseology or lapsing into parody. There is a certain rhythm, a cadence to his work that is a subtle trademark. I wanted to fill up a stylistic reservoir in the back of my head just enough to reflect his literary sensibilities without having to constantly look over my shoulder to make sure I was doing it right. I didn't want to be self-conscious or to try to do Serling.

The posthumous collaboration on "Our Selena is Dying" became the most difficult script of all those I wrote for the show, and the one I worked hardest to make absolutely perfect. Remember, the outline was six pages—the script had to be about twenty-one pages. And there was virtually no dialogue in the outline. So to capture the feel of the outline, I tried where possible to work chunks of the outline into narrative descriptions or actual dialogue. Take, for instance, the opening narration, delivered over a pan of the mansion:

Your attention is drawn to the house on the left: the residence of the Brockman clan. An ancient brownstone, its paneled walls polished by darkness. A lightless, soundless place upon which a greater silence has fallen.

Which segues into the second half of the narration (not printed here) which repeats the description of a dying Selena Brockman provided earlier. Those two passages make up the largest use of verbatim material that could be extracted from the outline and used in dialogue. Beyond that, I was effectively on my own.

It was, in a way, like decoding hieroglyphs—you have to expand, to interpret, to make logical jumps in order to really follow what's being described. This is all the more true when you consider that an outline usually skips over points that will be expanded in script because the author *knows* how it will go from A to C, and often doesn't spell it out in detail. Unfortunately, though, the original author wasn't available to fill in the gaps. Equally maddening, a few spots that seemed to contain some crucial bits of description had been typed too low on the original page, now gone, to show up in the photocopy. So on several occasions I had to put myself in Rod's place and try to imagine what he *might* have written there.

Finally, the script was turned in, and met with enthusiastic response. It received the least amount of notes of anything I'd done before.

I hope it's good enough.

I hope I did it right.

Selah.

SOON TO COME: The Fate of Danny Kaye's Last Performance... Why Are the Writers Looking Confused?... Meet the Staff... Meet the Directors... AND: A Typical Day At The Office, Replete With Sunset Alerts. ■



Creating Koko: A Conversation with

PETER STRAUB

IN

1983, following the critical and popular successes of *Ghost Story*, *Shadowland* and *Floating Dragon*, Peter Straub virtually withdrew from the field of modern horror fiction. Apart from his collaboration with Stephen King on *The Talisman* (1984), he published only two novellas, "Blue Rose" (reprinted in *Cutting Edge*, 1986) and "The Juniper Tree" (*Prime Evil*, 1988). While King, Clive Barker, and other contemporaries published two or more books a year, Straub was effectively silent. Until now.

Three years in the writing, *Koko* is at once Straub's triumphant return to the horror novel and his escape from the bounds of genre. A masterwork of suspense, *Koko* traces mass murder and serial murder from the depths of the Orient to the mean streets of New York City, invoking horrors that are not supernatural, but what Straub describes as a "sidestep" toward realism. The story behind *Koko*, told in this exclusive TZ interview, is one of the loss and rediscovery of a remarkable talent—and a stunning insight into the creative process.

TZ:

Was the idea of *Koko* there, waiting to be written, when you finished *The Talisman*?

STRAUB: Yes. In the middle of writing *Floating Dragon*, I had an idea about four or five guys who go to the Far East to look for an old platoon member of theirs from Vietnam because they thought he might have gone off the rails in a serious way. I wrote that much down, maybe a paragraph or more. It seemed a little tenuous—kind of "television-ish." But the idea was sold. I had a contract around the time we started writing *The Talisman*.

I didn't do anything about it for a long time. I wrote a more detailed description of the idea and just let it sit. And after *The Talisman*, I didn't write anything for almost a year. Then I was reading *The Freudian Fallacy* and something in there struck me about the connection between epilepsy and hypnosis. I went upstairs immediately and started writing "Blue Rose." And I knew that I was writing about the childhood of Harry Beevers, one of the characters in *Koko*.

That was the fall of 1984. The original contract specified that *Koko* would be submitted in the winter of 1984, and I knew there was no chance of that. After not having written anything for so long, I felt insecure enough that I wanted an extensive outline. So for about three or four months, I wrote a very long outline, seventy single-spaced pages, about *Koko*. The bulk of the outline concerned what is now the first third of the book. And the ending was extremely depressing—the main character, Michael Poole, was going to die of cancer. The men were going to go to the Far East; they were going to find this fellow who they thought had gone crazy and was killing people; and they would kill him and then discover that he hadn't done it after all. It was a very black book.

By that time I had bought the book back from Putnam, and we did a very nice three-book deal with NAL/Dutton. I thought that writing *Koko* would take about a year because I had this handsome outline.

Interview by Douglas E. Winter

STRAUB



TZ: But it took almost three years....

STRAUB: It was both a treat and terrible experience. I had to reconsider everything I thought about writing. It was very painful and very scary to see that I really hated every sentence that I wrote. On a good day I might write a paragraph or I might just write a couple of sentences. I rewrote endlessly. This had to do with being out of practice and letting my muscles virtually atrophy. In some ways this was very cleansing since it meant that I couldn't depend on all of my habits, my reflexes.

For at least a year, I felt terror and despair at how slowly it was going and how badly I wrote and how much I had to rewrite—and also at how limited my vision was. It was like having to take a hundred-mile hike and being able only to see the pebbles right in front of your feet. I had to describe every tiny little thing that every one of those characters saw. I had to give every word that they spoke. I couldn't summarize; I couldn't make leaps. I felt as if I were a piano player who once had a full keyboard and now had one octave, and that for the rest of my life my expressive capability would be limited to that one octave. In over a year, I wrote what in draft was about two hundred pages of *Koko*—perhaps one hundred of its final pages.

I didn't know where the book was going, really. I couldn't imagine why anyone would want to buy a book that was so black-hearted and depressing.

The next year I wrote about three hundred pages. I was able to write two to three pages a day and to make discoveries as I wrote, so it was great; it was more like writing again. And I began to feel a sort of joy—an internal satisfaction and imaginative involvement with what I was doing. I began to see more dimension and depth in the material that I had assigned myself—it no longer seemed like a TV show, but a story with genuine thematic concerns—and I became quite entranced with those characters.

I fell in love, really. I fell in love with working and I fell in love with the book and after that I was really in high gear. I could write five pages a day, which for me is about optimal level.

I became just wholly *involved* with the book. I started dreaming about it and I really surprised myself discovering what it was that I had been writing about all along. So the last year of writing the book was one of the greatest times of my life. It really had been earned.

TZ: What was your discovery—and why was it a surprise?
STRAUB: I realized that Tim Underhill, the writer whom the other characters go to look for, is the center of the book. Henry James is, in a sense, the secret hero of *Koko*; but in the more obvious sense, Underhill is the secret hero, because his conception of things prevails in the end.

I was on a Henry James binge during much of this time. I reread a lot of James, and I read a lot of James I had not read before, and I was very moved by almost all of it. I reread Leon Edel's biography. I read the journals of Henry James. And I found the sense of a really awake mind very moving—a deep awareness, without denial of pity and tragedy and glory, all mixed up together. That seemed profound to me.

I found myself thinking a great deal about a dream that Henry James had. The dream was of being a small boy, and having somebody, some evil force, trying to push in his bedroom door. And in the dream, James is terrified. He feels panic at the intruder, and then tries to hold the door against him, and knows that he is not strong enough, and that the evil force is going to push the door open and come in. And in a kind of magical transformation, James suddenly armors himself and throws the door open, and attacks his attacker.

And when he opens the door, he looks down a long hall in the Louvre Museum, and sees this tiny little black figure at the end of the gallery, running away like hell.

It's a dream of triumph. It's a dream of imaginative mastery conquering fear. And that, it seemed to me, was what *Koko* was trying to make itself be about: It was about imagination giving one a weapon to deal with terror and violence. So what had begun as a deeply negative book became, under its own impulses, extremely positive. It's very much about the ability of imagination first to create a world that is almost physical in its reality, that is profoundly right, that is full of salvation. And secondly, it is about the power of imagination to meet violence, to surround violence and make it comprehensible.

In the last months of writing *Koko*, I wrote like ten or twelve pages a day and wrote the entire last section—Underhill's monologue about Honduras—in one day and evening. By that time, I couldn't do anything wrong. I had the feeling that even if I were dead drunk and somebody clubbed me on the head with a baseball bat, the thing would virtually write itself. That I was just this kind of organism that was there to write it down. That's part of the reason one writes in the first place, to get to a state like that.

TZ: And when it was finished, did you feel relief, or triumph—or sadness?

STRAUB: I missed it enormously—the way you'd miss a lover that you part with, or a child who dies. The way you'd miss any central person or experience that is no longer with you. I was reading in a biography of Verdi about how he felt after he finished *Otello* and he felt mourning, loss, and grief because he had lived with all these people for quite a time, and had astonishing experiences with them, and suddenly they weren't his anymore, they were out there on the stage, everything was solved, and they were separate from him. I felt that way for maybe two months. Really depressed, I felt grief. And I had never felt that so intensely with a book, because I'd never quite had the experience of feeling at first dead, virtually dead, and increasingly reborn into my own strength. That will never happen again, because I'll never be fool enough to take a year off again.

TZ: Why did you decide to take the year off in the first place?

STRAUB: Well, I thought it would be helpful. *Floating Dragon* took a long time. It was a great, imaginative effort, and it was exhausting. And right after that, Steve and I entered the Hundred Years War of writing *The Talisman*. It was like a two-man assault on Everest, like trying to sail the Atlantic in a two-man sailboat—with, you know, leprosy or malaria or something. And that was very, very exhausting. When it was done, I was done.

I told my wife, Susie, that when *The Talisman* was done, I was going to take a year off and let things fill up. So I followed my own script. I did write the two novellas that were part of *Koko*, just because the ideas seemed to be so good that I couldn't not write them. And after a while, not working had its own impetus and gravity. I never felt blocked; I just wasn't interested in writing. I read lots of books and I took the trip to the Far East as research for *Koko*. I listened to a lot of music, and I spent a lot of late nights with a lot of people.

But after a while, I knew that I needed to work again. And once I started to work again, in a serious way, I began to realize how central work was to my character, and how necessary it is to me as a human being. I felt as though I had rediscovered myself, and rejoined all the better parts of myself. When I began to have dreams that I would later realize were a part of *Koko*, then I really knew that I had come into

myself again, and I did cry with relief once when a dream told me something I had to know.

TZ: What was the dream?

STRAUB: It's in the book. I dreamt that I went to this gigantic house, a big airy white building, and there were paintings stacked against the wall. I was looking at a painting called "Into the Darkness," and I thought, "Now, this is a very nice painting," and suddenly I was in the painting, driving on a road in a kind of gray, misty twilight, through what looked like a no-man's-land. Suddenly, ahead of me, I saw two lanterns by the side of the road, and as the car drove past the lanterns, there was a small boy and a rabbit, his size, both holding old-fashioned bull's-eye lanterns. And they looked beautiful, the boy and the rabbit. After I passed them, I kept looking in the rearview mirror and seeing the reflection from the lanterns. And finally, after various incidental things, I got to a big gray river. I got out of the car, and I looked at the river, and was kind of moved and impressed by the muscularity and strength of the river.

When I woke up, I kept thinking about the boy and the rabbit, and two days after that, I was walking down Columbus Avenue, doing some shopping, and it struck me that that boy was the dead son of Michael Poole. I didn't remember that, three or four years earlier, when I had written the outline, I had given Michael a son who had died shortly after birth. That had completely vanished from my memory. And this explained a great deal about that character. It explained why his marriage didn't work; it explained why he was so unhappy. Then I knew that I could use that in the book. That the rabbit would fit in. So I put the dream right into the book, kind of indulgently, but it belongs—subliminally, it

**"KOKO IS ABOUT THE POWER
OF IMAGINATION TO MEET
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VIOLENCE AND MAKE IT
COMPREHENSIBLE..."**

tells Michael the real identity of *Koko*.

That was an extremely gratifying experience. And I knew that I was really home again, that I was back where I ought to be.

TZ: It's going to be inevitable that someone will suggest there are autobiographical links between you and Tim Underhill. But how realistic is that?

STRAUB: There aren't very many. Tim Underhill has those experiences of the kind I was just talking about. He is a particularly excessive character, and I was never that excessive. The autobiography, if there is any, exists in the sense of there being salvation in discovering the power of one's imagination again, and discovering the value in itself of imagination. Underhill feels blessed when he sees something that in a way isn't there. When he sees this girl running down a street in Bangkok, whom nobody else sees, he understands why he

STRAUB

sees her, and he knows he's blessed—even though he feels terror and panic at the sight of her, he knows that his soul has come back to him. And that's, in a way, autobiographical. But none of the rest—I never lived in Singapore and Taiwan; obviously I'm not gay, I'm not a heroin addict, I was never in Vietnam.

TZ: But you do claim in *Koko* that Underhill, not Peter Straub, is the author of "Blue Rose" and "The Juniper Tree." STRAUB: Well, I assigned those novellas to Underhill because I realized eventually that they were a part of his effort to understand the roots of evil. Underhill is trying to understand what makes people do loathsome, horrible, degrading, vicious things. He's a writer, so he tries to do this by letting himself go on the page.

In the first novella, "Blue Rose," he tries to reconstruct Harry Beever's childhood. That story can't literally be true, because I don't think Harry Beever's that crazy. "The Juniper Tree" is Underhill's attempt almost to cast himself in the role of the madman.

When Underhill makes his comeback after the *Koko* business has been resolved, he writes about a boy raised in a shed in back of his house, and what happens to that boy when he gets out. And when I wanted to think about my next book, that was the most powerful thing I could think of, and that element will be there.

TZ: Did you wrestle with the notion that, having made your reputation as a writer of supernatural fiction, a move back to realistic themes could be one of considerable risk?

STRAUB: Sure. I had to consider it. For a long time there was a kind of supernatural element in *Koko*—the mysterious event in the cave in Vietnam. But what happens in the cave is now pretty clear, and the mysterious elements are explicable through a simple mechanism. That was as close as I wanted to get to the kinds of things I had written previously.

After *Floating Dragon*, I felt that I had pretty much

done everything I could. I'd grown tired of the themes. I no longer enjoyed that particular kind of gaudiness. I wanted really to write something that was closer in toward the world that we normally see. And in a way to be more responsible—not to have to rely on suspension of disbelief, since my own belief, such as it was in those things, had become a little patterned. And I wasn't as interested as I was before.

Which isn't to say that I won't be interested in those things again....

TZ: Was that a liberating feeling, or a frightening one?

STRAUB: It was both. I did have those muscles to inspire fear in that particular way. And it was frustrating now and then, because I couldn't use them. I was in another sort of game altogether—and it was tougher. But that was the only regret.

I took a step toward the world, but it was a sidestep—since I'm pretty sure that the subtext is the same. The subtext is about the real nature of the world as a place full of terror and violence. It is an immensely fearful, savage, frightening place. How people cope with that—to what extent they deny it, or recognize it—and the same sort of satisfactions are found in *Koko*: the satisfactions of love, of creating a family based on communal experience and shared feelings, of the necessity of a kind of bravery.

Whatever weapons the characters in *Koko* summon against the panic that Underhill describes as the "nearness of ultimate things" are the same weapons the characters in *Floating Dragon* found. But it seems to me that books like *Floating Dragon* and *Ghost Story* and *Shadowland* provide insuperable barriers to many readers. They look at what's happening on the page and say, "I can't swallow this. This stuff's ridiculous." And I wanted to get rid of those barriers. I could no longer see any satisfaction in having them. It was a great relief not to have to rely on stock imagery or on a wholly invented set of images; it felt more responsible. And I felt better about it, as though what I was doing was more interesting.

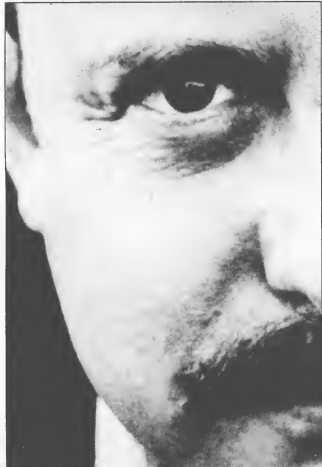
TZ: Is that impulse toward reality going to carry forward into the next book?

STRAUB: Where I'm going, I think, is toward murder—toward the imaginative world that can justify murder. Because I think that is horror.

The prime example is a character named Joseph Callinger, who, with his son, murdered several people in Pennsylvania. There's a book about him called *The Shoemaker*. Callinger fascinates me. He's barely in touch with everyday, quotidian reality. He's totally a creature of hallucination—visions and voices—because of the way he was drastically mistreated as a child. The visions are of floating severed heads, and the voices tell him that he has to castrate every man in the world and he has to kill everybody and then he'll be Jesus. And he's where he belongs—he's heavily sedated in a mental institution. He'll never get out; but if he does get out, people are going to be sorry, because he's going to go right back to pursuing God in his own way.

He's frightening, but there's something very touching about him, because in a way he's all imagination. The pity is that this imagination has no constraints—it's not bound by any form—and it's not a release, it's a torment. That is very interesting to think about, because of the obvious connections between madness and writing.

In the book I'm writing now, which is my version of the book that Underhill wrote, I'm going to deal with the world of serial killers and madmen, which allows me access to the same sort of places that I went to in my earlier books—but with a feeling of more responsibility on my part. ■



MARS (TZ)—It all started while I was standing in line at the supermarket checkout counter. After all, what else was there to do? (Aside from listening to some weary mother berate some young tyke for trying to eat half the candy in the store.) It was a casual glance, at first. (My wife didn't even notice.) The face caught my eye, though. And what a face! Dark, mysterious, seductive. I was mesmerized. I lost control. It wasn't my fault!

I wandered casually over and picked up the paper: *The Weekly World News*. Don't get me wrong. I don't normally do this sort of thing. No, no. I usually just laugh at the celebrity gossip on the covers of the tabloids...but *TV shows from Mars*? Hard journalism I just couldn't resist.

So, here's the deal: it seems that there is a mile-long face on the surface of Mars that was photographed by the Viking spacecraft in 1976. According to Richard Hoagland, the scientist who founded "The Mars Project" (not to be confused with von Braun's book of the same name), there are also these shapes or designs on the planet's surface that he says must have been created by some form of intelligence. And then there's this Swiss astronomer, Ludin Pasche, who says that *inside* the stone face is a five hundred thousand-year-old TV transmitter that's beaming a "doomsday warning" to Earth about the death of Martian civilization. Unfortunately, Dr. Pasche says there's only about ninety seconds of relatively clear transmission, and this Swedish astronomer, Lars-Tvar Carlsson, insists that's the real reason the Soviets are sending an automated probe to Mars: to re-transmit the signal back to Earth from its source.

Well, realizing that all of you would be just as shocked and surprised as I was to learn of this new threat to the Free World, I decided to investigate, to get to the bottom of all this and find out what our government was *doing* about it.

There was only one way to proceed, friends: call NASA. Surely they'd be on top of this. Dr. Gerald Soffen, head of Space and Earth Sciences at Goddard Space Center, had responded to Dr. Hoagland's claims, so I was determined to confront him with the full scope of this peril.

I picked up the phone and said, "Get me Gerry Soffen or heads will roll!" Then I remembered to dial the number.

When I finally got through, I decided to hit him hard and fast: "Dr. Soffen, why has this been concealed from the American public? Why didn't these photographs come to light earlier?"

"But they did...there was a tremendous amount of interest in 1976," he said evenly. He tried to tell me that this wasn't anything new, that Dr. Hoagland had been propounding these same ideas for years, and this latest batch of news stories were probably just a reaction to the Soviet Mars mission.

"But this *could* be the work of intelligent beings, couldn't it?" I asked, pressing on.

"Absolutely not," he said with finality.

"But what if it is? What if the Soviets discover them first? What if..."

"Mr. Dow, let's be careful what we're saying," Dr. Soffen interrupted.

That's when it hit me. Of course! His line must be monitored. No wonder he couldn't say more. He was trying to tip me off!

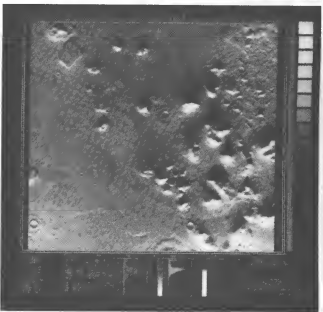
"Well, thanks for setting me straight, Doc," I said breezily, trying to let him know I was in on the secret. "Sorry to have troubled you."

"No trouble at all," he answered.

Since then, I've investigated the situation further, and discovered the following critical information. First, the planet Mars will make its closest approach to Earth in decades

IS MY FACE RED

BY
DAVID W.
DOW



MARS PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL SPACE SCIENCE DATA CENTER AND NASA; DR. MICHAEL H. CARR, PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

later this fall—a time of peak prime-time television viewing. Second, according to another unimpeachable source, the Face on Mars is said to bear an eerie resemblance to a certain rock 'n' roll superstar who supposedly died in 1977.

It's now obvious to me that the Face was built by intelligent beings. And since, according to my calculations, it will be impossible for the Soviets to do anything about it before this sees print, I can now reveal the daring public relations coup NASA has planned—with a little help from Hollywood: *They're planning to broadcast Elvis Presley's comeback live from Mars!*

If I were Gorbachev, I'd be worried.

AT THE SUMMIT

FICTION BY
FREDERIK POHL

They had gathered to search for higher intelligence—natural, artificial, extra-terrestrial, military. . . .

T

HE NAME OF THE MEETING THEY WERE GOING to was The First Annual Symposium on Non-Human Intelligence, and in the train going up to Zurich the first-class compartments were full of scientists. In the Trans-Europe Express's only smoking compartment there were six, of varying disciplines. They all spoke English—incessantly—until the food and drink vendor came around. Then it was, "*En l'argent française, combien?*" and, "*Haben-sie nicht echte Deutsches bier?*" and, "God, I never can remember how many schillings to the Swiss franc." The Russian answered everybody's questions for them. His name was Merejkowski, and he appeared to speak all languages idiomatically and without accent, the way God would have preferred to speak them. He had stopped off to sample the Oktoberfest on the way to the symposium. So had the American, Dr. Wayne Sackett. Sackett felt the Russian should have been as hung over as he himself was, but Merejkowski showed no signs of distress as

he dealt with everyone's orders and change and then returned, smiling, to silent listening.

"Only ten years ago," declared the German, Sneckensdorff, as he beamed around the compartment from his window seat, "such a meeting as this of ours would have been not to be thought of! It would have been deemed too trivial for real investigation, a congress of students of the question of non-human intelligence, when most would have said that none such exists."

"There's plenty of non-human intelligence in Washington," Sackett put in. "Or anyway, human non-intelligence—we come across that every time we try to get funded. Unless we're the Navy," he finished bitterly. Sackett's specialty was dolphins. His head hurt furiously, but he was trying to be alert and amusing for the sake of the Swedish SETI astronomer, who was blonde, female, and almost as tall as Sackett himself. She had seemed to show signs of interest in him at first, but that was

ILLUSTRATION BY
PETER SCANLON



SUMMIT

when she had imagined he was part of the group from Socorro, New Mexico.

"In France," the professor from Lyons informed them, "to receive the necessary funds is an automatic function of the government's science budget. There is no question of 'grants.' Research is a continuing process, leading where it will." He smiled at Ulla Halvarson, the Swedish blonde, and offered her a cigarette. She accepted it gracefully, and was immediately confronted with matches, lighters, and lit cigarette-ends from all five of the men. "Let me see," the Frenchman finished, glancing around. "We have among us two artificial-intelligence specialists, including myself; our friend from Germany who studies primate communications, a specialist in cetaceans from America and our charming radio astronomer from Stockholm. Of course," he added politely, "in as cross-disciplinary a symposium as this we have much to learn from each other. Even I."

There was a pause before the Austrian, Geltmann, cleared his throat. "Even you?" he asked.

"Even you and I," the Frenchman said generously. "I mean no offense to our colleagues. But you and I are the artificial-intelligence specialists here. We work directly with computers, is it not so? These others who deal with extra-terrestrial searches and animals' vocabularies use computers very much—could not carry on their researches without them, I think—but it is you and I, my Austrian friend, who work at the point where all such investigations come together. In effect, our work subsumes all of theirs." He smiled blandly around the compartment. Then he turned to Merejkowski and said, "I do not believe you have mentioned your own area of specialization."

The Russian smiled even more politely back. "My interest is in applications," he said.

There was silence for a moment until Geltmann glanced out the window. "We are slowing down for our destination in Zurich," he announced. "And, what a pity, it has begun to rain."

THE SCHLOSS WHERE THE CONFERENCE was to be held wasn't in Zurich, quite. It was across a valley and up the side of a mountain. Buses were waiting at the Zurich station to carry the scientists there, but Wayne Sackett hesitated. It would be nice to crowd in next to the pretty young Swede for the ride; but he had an obligation to his charges.

Duty won. Mourning the umbrella

packed away in his suitcase, already on the roof of the bus, Sackett crossed to the taxicab island and managed to explain to the driver that he wanted to be taken to the aquarium end of the Zurich Zoo. There he scuttled through the rain to a huge pressurized tent, where an American Marine studied his passport and checked his name against a list of conference registrants before allowing him to go in. Slightly nettled, Sackett pushed through the double-flapped entrance. It was true that the Navy had financed most dolphin research for many years—they found the things trainable for all sorts of purposes, most of them too secret for even Sackett to know about—and it was a Bureau of the Navy grant that had flown his dolphins from Key West to Switzerland. But it was very clearly specified that his work was *civilian and open*; Marine guards were not meant to be included.

Inside he got a whole new shot of angry adrenaline at what he saw.

There were six great connected pools of water, two huge, four smaller; one of the big ones was occupied and two of the little ones. The little ones contained his four dolphins. The big one—

In the big oval tank a killer whale swam restlessly in speedy circles.

She smelled the dolphins in the connecting pools. She obviously wished she could reach them—either to eat, or simply for the fellowship of scent.

And she had no business being there at all.

Sackett studied the plaque on her tank. It said UNITED STATES NAVY CETACEAN STUDIES PROGRAM. It was the first Sackett had heard of the program—at least, the first he had known the program had a name.

Unsteadily he walked around the orca's great pool, jumping aside to avoid the splash as she circled by him at railroad-train speed, muttering to himself. They hadn't just flown his dolphins to Zurich. They'd flow in an orca, and they'd built two great extra pools to make her comfortable. He tried to imagine the expense. He failed. Not just the transportation—the helicopter slings to the CSA, and again from the Zurich airport to the Zoo; the attendants to keep splashing her with water all through the trip; the planning. The water she swam in alone was no inconsiderable item. He bent and tasted it, as one of his dolphins came chirping up to greet him. Salt, all right, and as far as his tongue could tell an exact copy of semitropical ocean water. Yet he knew that the five thousand cubic meters (at least) of sea water in the chain of

pools had never seen a sea. It had started out as drinking water from Zurich's municipal pipes, boiled to drive off the chlorine, ion-exchanged to get rid of the metals, boosted with salts to the standard concentration of the world's oceans. It would, he thought, lack only the familiar smells and tastes of other living things. Therefore it would not seem friendly. It was a liquid a cetacean could live in, but not enjoy.

Sackett straightened up and looked for a keeper. When he had made sure that the dolphins were getting the right amount of fish, not frozen, certainly not pulled out of the fresh-water lake on the other side of the zoo, he pulled his coat around him and headed out. He paused at the door to listen to the sounds the cetaceans were making. "Breck-keck-keck kee-yee-yee," sang the whale, and the dolphins taunted it in reply, "kek-kekkekkek wheeeel"

Instinctively he fumbled in his pocket for his notepad. It wasn't there, of course. Also of course, he didn't need it; each tank, as he had already seen, was fitted with microphones, and each microphone, he knew, led through dedicated lines to the analyzers and recorders that would be up in the *schloss*. By the time he got there every squeak, grunt, and trill would have been frequency-analyzed and Fourier-transformed, and the computers would have wave-matched them against every other call the cetaceans had ever made within the hearing of Man's instruments, to look for repeated "words" or "syllables" or, anyway, ejaculations.

What a pity, he thought, that all those man-centuries and dolphin-millennia of observation and experiment hadn't yet produced even a simple glossary of Dolphin. Maybe they didn't have one....

But that thought, if accepted, would have made nonsense of Sackett's entire career. He dismissed it, and went looking for a cab.

AS THE CONFERENCE ACTUALLY BEGAN the next morning, the rain had stopped. If you looked out of the great bay window of the *schloss* on one side you looked down at the whole pretty city of Zurich, with its bright-blue lake behind. If you looked out of the other, the view was even grander: craggy, snow-covered peaks, a cluster of ski chalets, far down in the valley the winding river that led to Lake Zurich. Everything sparkled in the sun.

The *schloss* was huge. It wasn't huge enough to house all three hundred and fifty-one scientists gathered there

for the conference—they were all in guest houses, scattered about the grounds, some of which had once been the *schloss*' vast stables. But the main building held the great conference hall, and with plenty of room in lesser chambers for exhibits. And there were plenty of exhibits to fill the rooms, too, because it was not only the United States Navy that had spent big bucks to make an impression there. In the rooms for studies of intelligence among terrestrial non-humans there were the monitors for Sackett's dolphins and the Navy's killer whale, with TV screens following them as they patrolled their tanks; plus similar projects of the Japanese and the French (though neither of those had brought an actual animal to Switzerland); plus a whole bestiary of cat, dog, lizard, primate, and even insect studies. The scientists that worked with the smallest creature had the easiest time; there was an ant colony, demonstrating the way they recognized intruders, and a beehive with foragers obediently dancing out directions to spurious "flowers" of sugar water. One of the Italians was known to Sackett. His name was Coccialeone; he was the ruddy-skinned, large sort of Italian who looks as though he ought to be a peasant from the Mezzogiorno but is generally a film director. This one, though, was the director of primate studies from the University of Bologna, and he was standing in front of a cageful of his chimpanzees. "Ah, Sackett-a," he greeted the American, wagging his head reproachfully. "I bring one or two monkeys, yes, that is quite a grand thing to do, but you Americans bring a whole ocean!"

"It wasn't my idea," Sackett told him, feeling almost embarrassed. "It was the Navy that paid the bills."

The Italian nodded. "And in my case," he announced, "*l'esercito*—the Army; they hope, I think, that if they can talk to apes they can put them in uniform and, who knows, conquer Ethiopia again."

Sackett gave him a grin and a wave, but the smell of Coccialeone's chimpanzees was getting to him. He didn't linger, even in the chamber next to the Italian's, where an American group from Yerkes was showing tape loops of a gorilla named Harriet practicing Ameslan and keyboarding techniques. (But, fortunately, they hadn't brought the actual gorilla. Evidently they didn't have any Defense Department backing.)

Sackett moved on to the next rooms—three of them, with three walls in each displaying real-time pictures of radio astronomy centers, the big Arecibo



dish in its Puerto Rican valley, the Y-shaped rows of the Very Large Array in New Mexico, the British, the Russian, the Australian, the Chinese. He lingered at the exhibits of the radio telescopes in orbit, but really there was not much to see there except views of spidery antennae in black space. Then he moved on to the Artificial Intelligence sections.

Those were far the grandest. There had to be a couple of hundred million dollars worth of mainframes and processors, printers and CRTs. The AI rooms were not the only place in the *schloss* where computers were in evidence. There were CRT screens in every hall and even in the WCs and the coffee bar, for all the exhibits were of course computer-recorded and interconnected, so that any part anywhere could be studied anywhere else. But all lines came to a focus in the AI rooms. Here were the great computers that played chess and Go, controlled petroleum refineries (or would have, if any real refineries had been connected to any of these demonstration machines; here they simply pretended), translated Mandarin into Esperanto and Tagalog into Greek (very poorly), predicted high tides for any

date on any coast of Earth (very well), and, while they were about it, took care of messages, hotel bookings, and airline reconfirmations for each of the symposium's three hundred and fifty-one participants.

THE FACT THAT THERE WERE THREE hundred and fifty-one participants would normally have meant three hundred and fifty-one papers, since everyone would want to give a paper to justify his travel expenses and fatten his vita. That many could not be managed. It was, after all, only a three-day conference, with the morning of the second day kept free for "informal interaction" (which meant sight-seeing).

After breakfast Sackett walked back down the hill to his room, studying the printed program he had just picked up. There were, he found, nearly two hundred papers scheduled—five or six at a session, four sessions on the first day, two on the second because of the morning off, three on the final day to allow for windup ceremonies. Of course, that didn't quite do it; so there were three concurrent tracks—and naturally, he

CONTINUED ON PAGE 88

Unknown Things

Andreas Hoogstraten's obsession with odd objects seemed just the eccentricity of a wealthy man. But as Mr. Dennison is about to discover, that obsession is far stranger than he imagines. . . .

I have met any number of collectors during my thirty years in the antique trade, greedy ones (though of course they're all greedy one way or another,) and some with superb taste and a deep understanding of their fields, some with book knowledge and no taste at all, others who collect status symbols or security blankets, rare people with whom it is a joy to converse and many more utter bores, and others still so unbelievably eccentric that they defy classification. But Andreas Hoogstraten was strangest of them all. Always polite, almost always smiling, he still seemed to carry with him that eerie coldness you find in haunted houses. Neither his obvious wealth nor his perfect tailoring, neither his patrician nose, sleek blond hair, and thick, impossibly yellow eyebrows, nor a voice as soft and gentle as a wooing dove's could conceal it, at least from me.

I met him first in a Glastonbury pub. Every year, I'd go to England, buy an ancient van, and spend two months at least driving around and about, through Scotland and back down to Wales and Cornwall, buying big antiques and filling them with little antiques, then for the last third of my time crossing over to the continent and doing the same thing in France and the Low Countries. When the van was full, I'd ship it back as deckload on a freighter—this was in the days when you could do that—and drive it home to Saybrook from wherever it landed. It was a lot of fun, and I enjoyed every bit of it.

The Glastonbury pub was called the Weeping Nun—after some local ghost story—with an eighteenth-century sign that showed its dismal subject against a background of ancient tombstones and a silver moon—but inside it was the essence of English country hospitality, with all the dark wood and pewter and hunting prints you might expect, a great fireplace fit for roasting haunches of beef but cold now in the summertime, and neither a jukebox nor a telly to ruin the atmosphere. I went there with a local dealer, Tod Bardsley, with whom I had done business for several years, and we were just about to have lunch when Hoogstraten came in. He waved. He strode over to our table, carrying his cold aura with him.

"Mr. Bardsley, they said you'd be here, but I see you're with a friend?"

Bardsley nudged my foot under the table. He moved over. "Ah, do sit down, Mr. Hoogstraten," he invited. "Charles here won't mind. He's a fellow dealer—" he chuckled, "—always happy to meet another customer, like all of us." ▶

b y R E G I N A L D B R E T N O R

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JAMES STONEBRAKER

WH



Unknown

We were introduced. I shook Hoogstraten's tense, cold hand. I was, I said, pleased to meet him. I was indeed a dealer, but I was a long way from home.

Briefly, Bardsley told him about my yearly trips, while the girl brought us two half-and-halves and took his order for a whiskey and soda.

"You really must get around," he commented, looking at me intently. "I imagine you see a far greater variety of things than the average dealer, don't you?"

"Rather!" laughed Bardsley. "There's not a shop from Land's End to John o' Groat's Charlie's not been in, to say nothing of across Channel. I daresay he's probably seen a thing or two that'd strike your fancy."

and have a look around and made me promise to keep my eyes peeled for any of his mysterious objects. He was, he told me, on his way to Istanbul and the Near East generally, and perhaps to Nepal and, now that the Chinese were letting down the barriers, to Tibet.

Shortly after our lunch arrived, he rose to go, saying he'd see Bardsley later at the shop, and once more he made me promise to look out for him.

He left, and I asked Tod about him.

"He's a rum one, Charlie. Buys anything if you can't tell him what it is, and pays well too. Last time in my place, he saw a weird cast-iron tool with a lot of cogs and a twisty handle that somehow didn't seem to connect with anything. He peered at it and

brook and visit my shop, and for three or four months I almost forgot about him. Then, at a flea market, I found a gadget I couldn't make head or tail of—one which ordinarily I'd have passed by without a second look. It was beautifully made of brass and polished steel, and its fitted mahogany box clearly went back to the last decade of the nineteenth century. Cased with it were eight or ten brass wheels, the rim of each serrated with geometrical neatness and with its individual pattern. It had a central axis to which these might have been affixed, a plunger like a date-stamp's, a spirit level, and two calibrated dials the purpose of which I couldn't even guess at. The man who had it thought it might have been a check-writing device, but he couldn't tell me how it possibly could have worked.

I bought the thing for less than twenty dollars, and that night I phoned Hoogstraten and was pleased to find him back from his journeyings. I described it to him, and instantly his voice came alive with interest. No, he couldn't possibly come up to Saybrook, not then, but would I bring it to New York?

I hesitated, for it seemed like quite an expedition for what I assumed would be a pretty petty deal, and at once he answered my unspoken question. "You needn't worry about the money part, Mr. Dennison—it is Dennison, isn't it? I am accustomed to paying well for anything that meets my criteria—at least in three figures—unless, of course, the seller has already set a lower price. In this case, even if I do not buy it, I'll make the trip worth your while."

So I agreed to bring it to him on the Sunday, and he gave me an address near Sutton Place—his card had carried only his phone number. The cab dropped me off at two in the afternoon in front of a several-story, obviously very expensively converted brownstone, with a martial doorman mounting guard at the entrance. I waited humbly while he made his phone call, and saw that there was only a single flat on each floor.

"Mr. Hoogstraten is waiting for you," he told me finally, giving my shoes and sports coat a supercilious farewell appraisal. "Take the elevator to the third floor."

The elevator was smooth and swift and new, and I was whisked to my destination in an instant. There a manservant was waiting for me—I won't say a butler. He was short and muscular and massive, with a pale square face and huge hands. I judged him to be some sort of general factotum—chauffeur perhaps? Guard? He looked



"What do you collect?" I asked.

He turned his head, and I found myself looking directly into his lashed eyes. They were almost a matte blue, reminding me of Wedgwood Parian ware, and they looked dry, as though they'd never known tears. "What do I collect?" he said, "As our friend here will tell you, I buy anything I do not understand. I do not mean the expert's understanding of antiques and works of art. If I do not know what a thing is, if I cannot imagine what it was made for, it intrigues me, and if it's for sale I buy it. You see, if I do not know, and if nobody can tell me, it makes me determined to find out, to solve the problem. Where is your shop?"

"In Saybrook, in Connecticut."

"Well, that's certainly near enough to me. My apartment's in New York."

We exchanged cards, and he said he'd take a run up one of these days

"What do I collect?"

Hoogstraten said. "I buy anything I do not understand. If I cannot imagine what it was made for, it intrigues me, and if it's for sale I buy it."

peered at it, and finally took it with him looking like the cat fresh from the cream jug. A year or so back, too, I found him a painting—a dark thing like something seventeenth-century Dutch—but not like any you ever saw. The more you tried to make out what the subject was, the odder it looked. But it was done by a real artist, you could tell that. He paid me seven hundred without a quiver. And the real beauty of it is, he buys things that otherwise you'd have on hand forever—so what if he is strange looking, with those crazy eyebrows and blue-blue eyes?"

I told him then about the coldness, but he said the man had never affected him that way, so I put the thought aside as a quirk of my own.

Now I know that it was not.

ACTUALLY, HOOGSTRA滕 NEVER DID take the trouble to come up to Say-

more like a hit-man. But he was polite enough, bowing me through the hall and opening the door for me.

I don't know exactly what I had expected, but it was not the Museum of Modern Art decor that greeted me, spare and stark and rectilinear, self-consciously manipulating mass and light and shadow in grays and blacks, startling whites, intrusive yellows, solid reds, some of the furniture echoing it, some tortured, twisted, with a thin scattering of anomalous ornaments. Of the objects he collected, there was no sign.

My face, I know, must have mirrored my astonishment, but he did not notice. He had eyes only for the package I was carrying, and I saw how hard his small black pupils were in their Wedgwood settings. He did not ask me to sit down. Dressed like something from a *Vanity Fair* men's fashions ad, he seized it without a word, opened it. His lips now drawn back from his almost too-even teeth, he plucked the gadget from its box, hastily put the box down on a table, seated himself. For several minutes, he examined it, testing this, trying that, while I stood there uncomfortably.

Finally, "What do you suppose it is?" he said.

"I haven't the foggiest," I answered. "The man I bought it from thought it might have been intended as some sort of check protector."

He said that this was nonsense, and went back to his examination for several more long, silent minutes.

Then he looked up at me. He smiled, and again I felt wrapped in coldness. "It is satisfactory," he told me. "Yes, it is completely satisfactory. I shall derive pleasure from it." He nodded. "Indeed yes. Will five hundred be adequate?"

"You are very generous," I said, accepting the five hundred-dollar bills.

And at that point, a door opened and a woman entered. The effect was unbelievable. She paused, regarding us—and suddenly, as far as I was concerned, no one else was in the room. Her presence dominated it. She was tall, her hair coal black, as were her eyes. Her cheekbones were high. But the physical details were nothing compared with the totality. Suddenly I knew why men had imagined goddesses, and sacrificed to them, why there had been tilting in the lists and knightly quests, why late Victorian artists like Burne-Jones had so idealized the beauty of womankind. And simultaneously there was another surge, one I still feel when I remember her, that very natural one that sets your loins afire.

She turned toward us, and against all reason I was quite sure that she did not walk, but flowed, floated. Nor was she gowned for any such effect. She was dressed simply, in a tailored suit with white lace at the throat, and almost no jewelry; a brooch, a wedding ring.

Hoogstraten looked up, frowning slightly. "You're going out?" he asked.

"Yes, dear," she answered—and at the word irrational jealousy flamed in me. "Only for a—how do you say it?—for an hour or two perhaps? You do not need me here?"

She had the strangest accent I've ever heard, one I was quite unable to identify. All I can say is that somehow, to my ear, it sounded archaic.

He didn't even answer, his attention

"Mrs. Hoogstraten?"

I asked.

"Yes, yes," he replied.

"Pretty, isn't she?"

She's magnificent! I

thought. But I had sense enough not to say it.

once more on the thing I'd sold him.

"Goodbye," she said, smiled very slightly at me, and left.

I had to interrupt him. "Mrs. Hoogstraten?" I asked.

"Yes, yes," he replied, a hint of irritation in his voice. "Pretty, isn't she?"

She's magnificent! I thought. But I had sense enough not to say it. It took him a moment more to remember I was there, but with a sigh he put the object down again. "Thank you, Dennison," he said. "You will call me if you find anything else, won't you? Yes, yes. Now Varig will show you out."

He must have pressed a button, because immediately the servant was at the door. Hoogstraten did not say goodbye.

THAT NIGHT I DREAMED OF HER, A DREAM which Tennyson might have written for me, or one of the Cavalier poets,

and I had a hard time explaining my abstraction to the sweet girl I was going with. *She* was in my mind, and would not leave, and I began to hope I'd never find another object for her husband, no matter how profitable the find might be.

As it turned out, during the next several months I found three things that seemed to have been made especially for him, and on each occasion he demanded that I bring them to him in New York. I justified it by telling myself that, after all, I was a dealer and could not forego such easy money, but I know now that it was far more the hope of seeing her even for a moment, of hearing her speak a few casual words. I dreamed of her time and again, and tormented myself with the



thought of her embraced in her husband's coldness.

My second visit went much like the first, except that she was in the room when I arrived, again attired very simply in—but what she wore is of no moment. She stood up when I walked into her presence, and though again Hoogstraten did not introduce us, she thanked me for the machine—was it not a machine?—I had sold Andreas, which had pleased him. He was a genius. His mind, it demanded problems.... It was very nice of....

I stood there tongue-tied, trapped by the magic radiating from her. Hoogstraten was already opening what I had brought him—a clock but not a clock. A thing with complicated clockwork in a case which could have been made by some exotic Fabergé, which told something, but not time—at least not any time that might make sense to us. After

Unknown

a moment, his voice still soft, he told her to leave the room, and without demur, as I stood there grinning at her foolishly, she left. For that I hated him, and almost for spite I asked him seven thousand for the thing. He paid me seventy-five hundred, again in cash, and sent me on my way.

Two months passed before I went again, two months during which I still dreamed of her, still thought of her, wondered at whatever power she had over me, at what her life might have been before she married Hoogstraten and, indeed, why she had married him.

This time, again, she was in the room when I arrived, and again she spoke to me, nothing memorable, comments about the season possibly, or how very good I was to find another treasure for Andreas. Then, once more, he sent her out; and the performance was repeated. He first became wholly absorbed in what I'd brought—what was it? Half book, half Byzantine icon?—but written in a script completely alien to me, resembling none I'd seen before, which seemed to change as its pages turned, momentarily revealing illustrations that vanished almost instantly. He was delighted with it, and paid me far more than I would have dared to ask. Then, for the first time, he became almost friendly.

"Dennison," he said, "where do these come from? Why were they made? Was it simply as a challenge to me, to my intellect? I have no doubt that some of them came from hidden cultures, arts not permitted to the masses, lost civilizations, perhaps even other worlds! But *why*? Again, I ask you, is it deliberate? A continuing contest? To see if I, Andreas Hoogstraten, have a breaking point?" He stood. From a skeletal cabinet as convoluted as the last agony of an El Greco saint, he lifted a vessel, which I had seen before, but which I had taken simply for some far-out potter's drug-dream. He handed it to me. Perhaps a foot high, almost opaque, it was enormously heavy.

"Look at it, Dennison," he said. "Do you know what it is?"

Up close, it looked like grayish glass, but with a higher lustre, and it was much, much heavier. Like any vase, it tapered to a neck, but there the resemblance ceased, for the neck doubled back on itself to penetrate the body halfway down and emerge again in a mouth melding with the other side.

"It is a Klein bottle, Dennison. Are you familiar with the Moebius Strip?"

"You mean a strip of paper you give a sort of twist to and then join its



"Dennison," he said, "where do these things come from? Was it simply as a challenge to me, to my intellect? To see if I, Andreas Hoogstraten, have a breaking point?"

ends so that in effect it has one side only?"

"Exactly. Well, a Klein bottle is like that, only in three dimensions. Its inside is its outside and vice versa. Do you understand?"

I said I understood.

He took it from me, looked at it with an expression of mixed pride and anger. I have drilled into it, Dennison. I have used a little instrument with which surgeons look into our bodies' inmost secrets. Inside it is a complex of beautifully ground crystals, and what seem to be controls and things I cannot put a name to. So far, it is the only unknown thing that has defeated me. I have had it several years, and I know no more about it than when it came to me, but my getting it could not have been an accident. It was part of the test, the challenge."

Shocked at his megalomania, I

fumbled for something innocuous to say. "I—I suppose you have a pretty large collection by this time, Mr. Hoogstraten?"

He replaced the Klein bottle in the cabinet. "A large collection?" He said it with a sneer. "Dennison, I have always two or perhaps three. They do not defeat me for very long. Indeed, this is the only one I have had to keep for several years."

"But what do you do with them?" I asked. "Do you give them away or sell them?"

"Certainly not. When I have solved them, when they have served their purpose, I destroy them. That is the only way for me perhaps to get revenge, you understand?"

Frankly, I was horrified. I started to protest that some of them were treasures, that they exhibited superb craftsmanship, that surely scientists would be interested in them.

He cut me off before I had three words out. "Never!" he cried. "When I have solved them, they are nothing! Nothing! They no longer have a soul!"

He paid me even more than he had previously, and exacted a promise that I'd keep hunting for him; and I left telling myself that no matter what I found, I'd never go back again.

IT WAS FIVE MONTHS BEFORE I DID, JUST after I returned from my annual trip to England, and then it was because I knew I had to see her one more time. In a sense, she had never left me. I would wake at night from my Pre-Raphaelite dreams of her, despairing, wondering how ever she could have married him—not for his money, certainly. But why, why, *why*?

So I went back. The thing I'd found was simple—a crude tool, mysterious only in the fact that it had no discernible function. This time, when the man-servant admitted me, I saw that she wasn't in the room, and all the while Hoogstraten examined what I'd brought him, I kept looking at the door through which she had come and gone, wishing, hoping.

Finally he rose. "I will take the tool," he told me, "even though it is not of so high a quality. I shall pay four hundred only."

I could control myself no longer. "I haven't seen Mrs. Hoogstraten," I said, I hoped casually.

He stopped counting money. For moments, those cold, glistening pupils stared at me. Then, "No," he said, ever so gently. "You see—" he smiled, "I found out what she was."

O kay, so the thought of another holiday season just around the corner doesn't thrill you. Maybe it's been a "Bah! Humbug!" kind of year for you so far.

Perhaps you were picked on by a grumpy Scrooge of a boss. Or sneered at by selfish grinch. Or slowly tortured by calculating, mean-spirited little elves. But whatever the cause of your Yuletide doldrums, take heart, smile big, and pucker up! 'Tis the season of mistletoe and magic. As more than one TZ Christmas episode points out, good things can happen, even to underdogs like you!

To help you through the holidays, we've prepared this little Christmas quiz, containing a few words of hope and cheer from TZ's creator himself. Just solve the trivia questions below, and the circled letters will spell out a secret message of comfort and joy. Good luck, and be well! (The answers are on page 45.)

1. In this TZ episode, a professor get his Christmas gifts from his old students, now dead.
2. The father of fantasy, born on Christmas day, 1924.
3. The TZ episode "Dust" highlighted a sentiment appropriate to the season.

4. The controversial version of a Dickens tale that aired only once.

5. Grandma is a little wired in this TZ episode.

6. He starred in the 1960 episode "I Shot an Arrow in the Air."

7. Tastes great on turkey.

- 8.** It's a Christmas carol, or a setting for a scary tale.

- ### 9. Holiday transportation.

10. Mystical animals used for aviation purposes.

- 11.** Star of number 15.










- 12.** Where our head seems to be on New Year's Day.

13. Role played by number 11 in number 15.

14. Some gifts are not so welcome. Name the TZ episode that could also have been named "I Nightmare of Genie."

15. Name the TZ Christmas episode that our epilogue answer comes from, and you'll have the final clue.



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THERMAL ANALYSIS 3157



YOU'D BETTER WATCH OUT

What surprised him wasn't the key left in the lock, but that he was able to turn the knob; just let himself into his sister's place without using the key.

What worried him instantly was the silence. His sister's kids weren't whooping to greet Uncle Dave, and it was like death in here. Dave frowned.

Even if this was only a strictly functional apartment in just one more stingy, spring-em-up-fast development, where else would children be on Christmas Eve but home? Sis admitted she was never certain where her kids were these days, or even what sort of weird friendships they were making, since she and Wally had to be out all day, working a hundred jobs each, just to save enough for the down payment on a real house. But they should at least try to keep tabs on the kids.

Parents absolutely *had* to know what was happening, who the kids were with—

Then David Cramer's professional instincts took over, and he started thinking like a police detective again. He remembered that his sister's firm closed at three o'clock today. His Timex claimed it was after five. Her husband Wally had even phoned around lunch to let Dave know; then add that he had "a li'l las' minute shoppin' t'do" before the evening. Dave grinned without humor. He wouldn't have imagined there was much to buy for a wife and three kids at a company Christmas party.

Arms burdened with gift-wrapped presents, he froze another second in disapproving thought, more uncle—or big brother—than cop.

Why had he thought of his nephews and niece along with the term "weird" ►

A CAUTIONARY TALE
ABOUT THE HAZARDS
OF RAISING CHILDREN
IN THESE TROUBLED
TIMES. A LESSON ABOUT
THE IMPORTANCE OF
PRESERVING THE SPIRIT
OF THE SEASON.

FICTION BY
J.N. WILLIAMSON

ILLUSTRATION BY KELLY ALDER

WATCH OUT

friendships?" Why "weird?" At the back of his brain, dimly, Dave remembered catching a glimpse of little Ollie with a number of older boys, only a few weeks ago. Ollie had definitely been too far from home, yet Dave had merely waved at him, then driven on. Now that he focused on the scene, he halfway recalled seeing Tina, too, and Andy—but they hadn't registered in his mind strongly, somehow. Try as he might, he couldn't see them clearly. They'd dimmed out, like a half-remembered dream. He wondered if Sis and Wally forgot them too, whenever they were off at work. He tried to focus on little Ollie's pals, to see again what they'd looked like, and all he got was an impression of slickness—like slime coating the inside of an empty eggnog glass. That, and something he couldn't put a finger on for another instant. The word came to him at last: *Unity*.

Then the part of him that was sheer sleuth was whispering alarms and Dave was putting his packages any old place to poke into every room of the apartment, feeling strongly that something was wrong. Very wrong.

And when he found Wally's famous imported Irish sweater in a heap like a dead animal on the master bedroom floor, a burned-out butt smoldering in the rug, and the reek of booze, he was sure he was right.

"Sis...Wal?" Dave started down a short hallway, trying to keep his breathing from becoming a racket. "Yo, gang!" Pause. "Kids?"

For an instant, in the doorway to the strictly functional kitchen, Dave thought he'd found an explanation he could live with. Little magnetized figures were stuck to the refrigerator door and, en route to them, he expected to find a message pinned beneath a jovial Santa or Santa's Helper. But on closer examination, Santa was red-faced but not fat and his helper was a female character Dave didn't recognize, grinning as if she'd just been propositioned. He popped the bare-chested male off the fridge on impulse and sent a scrap of paper fluttering to the linoleum.

When Dave picked it up, he found it sticky and blank. *Like I feel*, he reflected, replacing the paper under the magnet and heading for the front room. *Stuck for an explanation, blank of a reason for everyone to be gone*. Unless Wally had gotten loaded fast, then staggered by the apartment to haul Sis and the kids somewhere. But that seemed improbable, unlikely as hell. Because they lacked—what was that damn word again?—*unity*. And Wally wasn't in the



**DAVE STOPPED
WITH HIS LEGS
SPREAD AND
BRACED, ARMS
AKIMBO, SIMPLY
STARING AT THE
MAMMOTH FIR, AS
IF IT WERE EITHER
A CRYSTAL BALL
CONTAINING THE
SECRETS OF THE
FAMILY'S FUTURE,
OR A PUZZLE
FILLED WITH SLY
HINTS, CRUEL
CALCULATIONS.**

least bit slick.

Frowning, he edged into the front room, immediately impressed—and annoyed. The gleaming tree Wally had picked out this year was even larger, more pretentious, than it usually was. Gifts were under it, though not as many, maybe, as usual. Glowering, Dave swore to himself and clenched his fists. People shouldn't leave their trees lit up like that if they were going to go off somewhere. Failing to teach children common sense amounted to teaching them to be careless; shorted-out Christmas lights wrecked the holidays for folks every year. Not that he was any great shakes of an uncle, of course. He and his ex-wife hadn't been "ready" for kids—as if anybody ever was. *Hell, I couldn't make little Tina's or Andy's birthday parties this year. This is probably the first time I've even been in this place since Ollie's birthday. And Ollie'd been late himself that time. The other kids covered for him and Sis didn't even ask him where—*

Dave stopped with his legs spread and braced, arms akimbo, simply staring at the mammoth decorated fir—as if it were either a crystal ball containing the secrets of the family's future, or a puzzle filled with sly hints, cruel calculations. *I'm sweating*, Dave noted with surprise. Perhaps it was just this damn makeshift neighborhood filled with folks who believed home was just a place to flop when they ceased running, doping, drinking, making out.

Yet the mere sight of the beautiful tree chilled the detective part of David Cramer as if he had been standing in the parking lot at three a.m., two feet deep in snow, locked out of a burning building.

When he figured out, finally, that what bothered him wasn't the tree but the packages beneath it, Dave strode deliberately across the functional carpeting and stooped. Experimentally, he picked up a gift for Ollie and lightly, carefully, shook it.

There was nothing inside. Funny, but he'd have bet his badge on it, his pension.

He retrieved a gorgeous present with *TINA* on the red-and-green tag, knew at once it, too, was empty. He hefted a gift intended for his other nephew and got the same results.

How he'd been able to tell from halfway across the room that there weren't any toys or clothes in the array of packages under Sis's and Wally's wonderful tree, Dave didn't know. Maybe it was because he *cared*, at least a little. But he sensed that if he raised and shook

every gift, he wouldn't locate one with anything in it. All were wrapped, some by Sis, some by stores where she'd bought them in her customary rush. Yet none of the packages had been opened.

What in hell was going on?

Still kneeling, his nerves on alert, Dave stared up, craned his neck to see the top of the tinsel-draped giant.

The ornamental star that had been in the family for generations was broken, a jagged shard. The carmine glint it held must have been only a reflection of the blood-red bulbs below. Lowering his narrowing gaze, listening to his heart pound, Dave felt something else was amiss about this familiar scene; amiss—or missing.

Then he was jumping up, racing back to the kitchen, knowing what had troubled him after finding the crumpled, imported sweater on the bedroom floor. He almost tore the magnets from the fridge door, then settled for stooping while he perceived that they weren't really sticky, the way kids' things always were, but slimy. Close to gasping now, he stooped to the level of children to squint into the face of the beardless, red-cheeked, half-naked male figure and the grinning, terrified face of the female—incapable of grasping the kind of collective imagination that would have

been required, but understanding with difficulty how unbelievable the myths of Santa Claus would seem to those youngsters dismissed as "latchkey children." Children who came and went as they pleased, with whomever or whatever they wanted, to do...whatever. Unknown children, who'd wandered into the unknown. Who, having exchanged careless parents for marginally older clans of kids who cared very much about the power of bonding, became—mutants, of a sort that didn't quite show.

Wally's stereo began playing carols. Dave had heard the front door open and hadn't moved. He remained at the fridge with his hand on it, turning cold, trying vainly to remember what his only niece had looked like the last time he had seen her. He thought about a holiday tree bought really for the hypothetical grown-ups, with rejected gifts beneath its shining, spreading lower branches—perhaps the darkest act of vengeance imaginable to kids of a certain age. He realized there were no presents there at all for his sister, Wally, or old Uncle Dave—and it came to him that children of a slightly greater age were capable of imagining infinitely worse deeds than "forgetting" presents.

There was a message on the blank

scrap of paper. It was only that there were no words written on it. It had to do with empty things, like packages with nothing in them, new minds that required input and would get it somewhere, parents—whole families—with nothing inside. Besides, little kids couldn't read or write anymore, and they hated to leave notes, particularly when what they needed to say was perfectly obvious.

Scuffling noises, drawing near. *I won't be scared, they're still kids*, he told himself. For the life of him, Dave could not envision the features of the older ones he had glimpsed with little Ollie. Maybe it wouldn't have helped anyway. Refusing to turn, he heard too many sounds at the kitchen door for three small children. Feeling like something left overnight in a dirty glass, he concentrated on the Christmas carol recorded years ago and thought, in the dregs of a unity he had never before been conscious of, *Damn it, we must all grow up!*

Tina, Andy and Ollie wished him a Merry Christmas in chorus, in unison, and they were not alone. Reflected in the window behind the kitchen counter was the glittering flash of a jagged tree topper plummeting down toward him like a falling star. ■

THE TWILIGHT ZONE CHRISTMAS QUIZ

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 41

ANSWERS:

1. T H E C H A N G I N G O F T H E G U A R D
2. R O D S E R L I N G
3. F O R G I V E N E S S
4. C A R O L F O R A N O T H E R C H R I S T M A S
5. I S I N G T H E B O D Y E L E C T R I C
6. D E W E Y M A R T I N
7. G R A V Y
8. S I L E N T N I G H T

9. S L E I G H
10. R E I N D E E R
11. A R T C A R N E Y
12. T W I L I G H T Z O N E
13. S A N T A
14. T H E M A N I N T H E B O T T L E
15. N I G H T O F T H E M E E K

SERLING HOLIDAY MESSAGE:

"T H E R E ' S N O T H I N G
M I G H T I E R T H A N
T H E M E E K"

Rod Serling's



**The return of our
exclusive series on
TV's successor to
The Twilight Zone.**

Welcome, art lovers. It's been quite some time since you've joined us on our nocturnal strolls through these eerie aisles of often weird, sometimes whimsical paintings that hang here in the Night Gallery. We're glad to have you back.

So, step this way, please, and don't venture too near the shadows. The Gallery's been closed a while, and we've no way of knowing who—or what—may have moved in during our absence...

Hello again! Longtime *Twilight Zone* readers will recall that our show-by-show coverage of Rod Serling's *Night Gallery*, which began in the April 1985 issue, was suspended in mid-series a year later. Since then, a number of people have written to us asking what happened to the series, and whether we were ever going to finish the guide. Now that we're back, we thought a few words of explanation were in order about where we've been all this time.

When we began the series, *TZ*'s first editor T.E.D. Klein asked us to follow the model of Marc Zicree's series on *The Twilight Zone* by including brief background articles on each season of the series, as well as show-by-show synopses, including Rod Serling's memorable opening and closing narrations. In the middle of the series, however, Ted departed to write novels, and our new editor, Michael Blaine, decided to cut back on the number and length of the articles, to make room for new features. Eventually, we saw that in the space allotted to us, we couldn't properly do both episode synopses and behind-the-scenes articles. So we attempted a compromise, publishing only shortened synopses in the February and April '86 issues. This proved unsatisfactory to all concerned, so we regretfully ended the series.

When the current editor, and you, the readers, let us know you wanted more about Rod Serling and *Night Gallery* in the magazine, we were delighted to pick up where we left off. To bring you up to date, we begin this issue with a recap of *Night Gallery*'s second season, and some background on the episodes which aired in October and November 1971 [see show-by-show synopses in February and April '86—ED]. Next issue, we'll conclude our recap, and begin coverage of the rest of the series. As an added treat, we've included a special interview with artist Tom Wright, who created many of the *Night Gallery*'s most distinctive paintings, and have included some of the show's most memorable artwork.

BEYOND FORMULA

Rod Serling's *Night Gallery* was criticized for "not knowing what it wanted it to be." In fact, this perceived weakness was actually a reflection of *Night Gallery*'s attempt to resist formula and to function as a true anthology fantasy series. ►

Night Gallery



RAISING HELL: *Night Gallery* producer Jack Laird, director Gene Kearney, and writer Theodore J. Flicker as demons in *Hell's Bells*.

feature by Kathryn M. Drennan and J. Michael Straczynski

Night Gallery



THE PHANTOM FARMHOUSE: David McCallum (left, with Ford Rainey) as a psychiatrist in love with a werewolf.

When it succeeded, it was as a result of the wide-ranging tastes of Rod Serling and producer Jack Laird, as well as the varied sensibilities that the show's many directors and writers brought to the show.

By all accounts, however, this approach made some executives at NBC and Universal nervous, and as production on the second season wore on, it became clear that Laird, Serling, the studio, and the network held widely divergent views as to what the series should be.

The network, said Serling in a famous quote, wanted "Mannix with supernatural trappings"—all action and horror with little thoughtful content. (*Mannix* was the popular detective show that aired opposite *Night Gallery* on Wednesday nights.)

Jack Laird, to his credit, wanted to continue adapting classic nineteenth- and twentieth-century fantasy and horror stories for the series, but unfortunately, he also wanted to continue the not-so-humorous blackouts that very few others liked—not Serling, certainly, not most of the directors, and not the studio which was becoming increasingly unhappy with the multi-segment, hour-long format.

Serling apparently agreed with Laird about adapting classic short stories, doing many of them himself. But he also wanted to write his own original scripts, in particular those that depended on subtle fantasy and thoughtful character studies, such as "They're Tearing Down Tim Riley's Bar." Serling had the least amount of influence in this struggle because contractually he had no creative control over the show, not even over his own scripts. He would begin to find that many of his scripts were either rejected outright or rewritten without his consent.

While the forces were gathering that would push the series toward formula television and away from the thoughtful and the experimental, viewers in the weeks from October 20 to December 8, 1971, saw eight hour-long installments containing twenty-two different segments. They represented just about every type of story, good and bad, that Rod Serling's *Night Gallery* specialized in—from the humorous to the serious, the frightful to the thoughtful, the purely psychological to the wildly supernatural.

On October 20, 1971, viewers were treated to what *TV Guide* labeled "two of the Gallery's best stories." The first was "The Phantom Farmhouse," adapted from the Seabury Quinn story by regular *Night Gallery* contributor Halsted Welles. Both a werewolf story and a love story, it unfolded with a dream-like quality under the direction of Jeannot Szwarc [See profile by James H. Burns, *TZ* Aug. '88] and the cinematography of Lionel "Curly" Lindon.

The episode was visually effective, despite some singularly unconvincing day-for-night shooting which, for economic and technical reasons, was common practice in television at the time. (Serling was one of many who complained about this practice to no avail. "It's infrequent that you can shoot night-for-night," he said. "If you'll notice on *Night Gallery*, very frequently it's supposed to be night, and, Goddamnit, there are sun rays coming out on one side of the screen. It never looks proper when they shoot day-for-night.")

Szwarc, whose credits include the recent network *Twilight Zone* ("Red Snow" and "The Last Defender of Camelot"), as well as the movies *Jaws 2*, *Supergirl*, *Santa Claus*, and *Somewhere In Time*, directed a total of twenty-four *Night Gallery* segments. He counts "Farmhouse" among his



Helmut Dantine in **THE DEVIL IS NOT MOCKED**.

favorites. "I had such an instant vision of the show. I've always had an affinity for anything which is the domain of the dream—what the French call *les songes*, anything which has to do with the subconscious. *Les songes* is a French word which means 'dreams,' but more than that because it's also something you can do awake—like sort of a combination of sleep dream and daydream."

That is also a perfect description of the evening's second offering, "Silent Snow, Secret Snow," narrated by Orson Welles, and directed with sensitivity by Gene Kearney, who also wrote the adaptation from the story by Conrad Aiken. This haunting story of a boy's spiral into quiet insanity, symbolized by his obsession with snow, is far more horrifying than many stories of supernatural evil, and yet still poignant.

Kearney wrote eleven scripts for the *Gallery* and directed nine, but this episode stands as his finest achievement on the show, made all the more remarkable by the fact it was one of the first things he had ever directed.

Night Gallery failed to achieve similar heights on October 27 with its offerings of "A Question of Fear" and "The Devil Is Not Mocked." Nevertheless, "Fear" turned out to be a fairly effective episode of suspense, helped along by fine performances from Leslie Nielsen and Fritz Weaver, and some nice plot twists that turn what appears to be a haunted house story into a chilling tale of revenge. "Devil," directed and adapted by Kearney from the Manly Wade Wellman story, recounts Count Dracula's contribution to the fight against the Nazis with neither enough humor nor suspense to make it successful.

(Syndication note: Both these segments have been cut nearly in half for syndication. "Devil" is so slight a story to



MIDNIGHT NEVER ENDS: Susan Strasberg in a thrice-told tale.

begin with, that it does not suffer nearly as much as "Fear" does in pacing and continuity.)

SERLING AND THE STUDIO

On November 3, viewers again saw a Serling script—or did they? "Midnight Never Ends," a story about some characters in search of a plot, is credited solely to Serling, but there is some question as to how much of the final draft was his. As far as can be determined, none of the script's early drafts still exist, so only a couple of things can be said for certain.

One is that by this point in the season, Serling himself has said that some (but not all) of the segments aired with his name on them had been changed considerably from what he had originally written. And it is true that this script as filmed doesn't sound like a Serling script because of its wooden dialogue.

Also, Gerald Sanford, the Executive Story Consultant during the second season, claimed: "I rewrote the whole thing. That was all my show. I did the entire script. I mean, he [Serling] wouldn't have recognized it."

Whoever wrote it, the script wasn't particularly memorable, but the look of the episode definitely was, thanks to the combined efforts of Szwarc, Laird, cameraman Lindon, and Art Director Joseph Alves.

"A lot of the visual things had to be rethought," said Alves, "because we didn't have [the budget]." For instance, the script called for location shooting in the desert, which was out of the question at that point. "I remember talking with Jeannot and of course Jack [Laird] about stylizing it," said Alves. "We ended up doing it on the soundstage, the whole thing against black."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 54

"Good evening, and a cordial welcome. For you aficionados of the arts, we offer you paintings that run the gamut of the human experiences—and a few of the inhuman experiences. Our paintings are in oils, watercolor, acrylic, charcoal, and occasionally formaldehyde..."

—Rod Serling, from his introduction to *Night Gallery*

The Art Of Night Gallery

PAINTINGS BY TOM WRIGHT, FROM THE TELEVISION SERIES ROD SERLING'S NIGHT GALLERY, COURTESY OF UNIVERSAL TELEVISION.



pen on a shadowy space filled with paintings seemingly suspended in midair; darkness and images that seem to continue on forever. In the midst of it all is your host, the curator of this gallery, a familiar figure with an even more familiar voice.

Welcome to Rod Serling's *Night Gallery*.

OPENING NIGHT AT THE GALLERY

Rod Serling's second anthology fantasy series had its beginnings in 1969 when he and producer William Sackheim put together a television anthology movie consisting of three Serling dark fantasy stories. Sackheim suggested Serling also be the on-camera host as he had been for *The Twilight Zone*. Serling, in turn, suggested they tie the stories together with a painting to represent each story. Thus was born the *Night Gallery*.

The gallery for the TV movie's opening was a simple affair—a darkened "limbo" set with only three paintings, each on an easel covered with a red velvet cloth. Under each cloth was a painting by Universal Studios artist Jaroslav Gebr.

Gebr first worked closely with Serling on the designs. Then, using oil and canvas, he produced not only the introductory paintings, including the portrait of Joan Crawford for "Eyes", but all the other paintings used in "The Cemetery" and "Escape Route."

These latter two stories hinged on paintings that mysteriously changed in small, but significant, ways. Tight production schedules didn't allow time for painting multiple, nearly identical paintings, nor the opportunity to actually paint in the changes for each new camera setup.

So instead, Gebr used a system of appliques for ready addition and removal of details from the paintings. For instance, in the segment titled "Escape Route," Gebr created a full-sized painting of a concentration camp victim on a cross. Then, on separate material, he painted just actor Richard Kiley's face. When his character was transported into the painting, Gebr merely applied Kiley's face over the original face on the portrait. The same technique was used in the painting for "The Cemetery" to show a figure emerging from the grave and approaching the house.

WEEKLY EXCURSIONS TO THE GALLERY

By the time *Night Gallery* became a weekly series on NBC the following year, Gebr had moved on to other projects. So the new producer, Jack Laird, asked artist Tom Wright to join the show as the Gallery painter and occasional monster designer (he ended up designing the creatures for "Pickman's Model" and "Brenda," among others). Previous to this, Wright had worked with Laird as a production designer doing production sketches, storyboards, paintings for set decoration, and the designing of various special make-up effects and creatures for many other shows.

"I have a morbid sense of humor anyway," Wright recalled recently, with a laugh. "So I was perfect for the job."

Working with *Night Gallery* art director Joe Alves, Wright first changed the look of the gallery itself. Keeping the "limbo" set, they replaced the easels and the red velvet coverings, and instead suspended the paintings from the ceiling.

by Kathryn M. Drennan



"The Girl with the Hungry Eyes"
(third season)



**"She'll Be
Company for You"**
(third season)



gallery art (episode never produced)



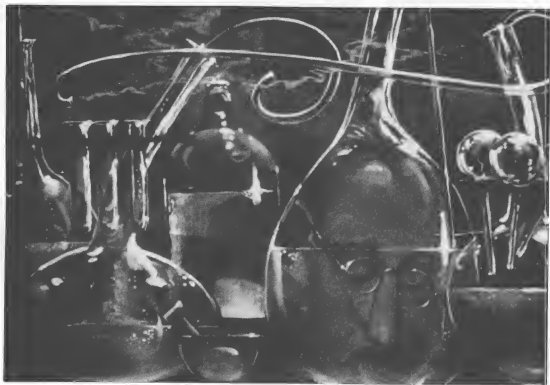
"Die Now, Pay Later" (shown only in syndication)

The Art Of Night Gallery

**"Death on
a Barge"**
(third season)



"Ring with the Red Velvet Ropes" (third season)



"You Can Come Up Now, Mrs. Milikan" (third season)

ing so that they would look like they were floating in space. Later, as the number of paintings for the series grew, weird and unusual sculptures by Logan Elston, Phil Bandierle, and Phil Vadeleir were added to the Gallery.

But most important were the paintings themselves, eventually totaling from one hundred two to one hundred six, according to Wright. With free rein to do as he pleased, Wright decided from the beginning to try to "make it look like different artists did all the paintings. So many involved vampires, death, skulls, you know—I tried not to do the same thing over all the time," says Wright. To further that end, Wright used a wide variety of techniques and styles.

He mostly painted on Masonite with acrylic paints ("because they dry the fastest and they hold good color"), but he also used ink washes, watercolors, marker pens and oils, and occasionally painted on canvas or wood.

"[Wright] is interesting in that he doesn't use any single artistic form," Serling once commented. "He paints in abstracts, impressionism, and almost still-life realism."

Working from a studio in his home, Wright found the job a challenge. "The biggest part of the work was coming up with the idea, and getting it down the way I wanted it. I would do them in groups. I would get maybe five stories, read those, and for each story I would do an idea. then I would take ideas in to Jack and say 'Here's what I'd like to do,' and he'd say 'Fine.' I'd order the sizes for the board or canvas or whatever I would want, and I'd go back to the studio and start painting. In the meantime, I got more scripts or outlines, and I'd begin doing ideas to get those ready and then take them in. It was a crash program, like everything in this business."

Because Wright had to work well in advance of production, he usually worked only from outlines of the short stories slated for adaptation. This wasn't a problem, however, because his aim wasn't to reproduce exact scenes from the episodes, but instead to capture the "character or the overall story—what it got across, the feeling, the mood."

Two exceptions were "Rare Objects" and "The Girl with the Hungry Eyes," cases in which he knew the stars ahead of time—Raymond Massey and Joanna Pettet—and put them into the paintings.

He also enjoyed putting people he knew into the paintings. Jack Laird, for instance, can be found in "With Apologies to Mr. Hyde" and "Quoth the Raven." Rod Serling is clearly recognizable in "Midnight Never Ends." Wright also used his family extensively: his wife Joy in "The Doll of Death," his oldest daughter Shevaun in "Brenda," and his youngest daughter, Chanell, as the model for the girl in "Little Girl Lost" and the boy in "The Boy Who Predicted Earthquakes." And just once he painted himself in—as an undertaker standing behind an open casket in the painting for "Die Now, Pay Later."

Wright's paintings were a hit with Laird, Serling, the other writers and directors on the show—and, it turned out later, with at least one major Hollywood star.

"I've done three or four pictures with Sylvester Stallone," Wright says. "And the first time I met him was on a picture

Wright was amused by some of the strange reactions fans had to his paintings. "Some thought I was this weird guy, and when they'd meet me they'd say, 'Oh, you did the paintings? We thought maybe you'd be hanging from the ceiling.'"

paintings? We thought maybe you'd be hanging from the ceiling.' Stuff like that."

AFTER THE GALLERY CLOSED

When *Night Gallery* was canceled by NBC, Universal decided to syndicate the show. To expand the number of episodes, they added edited versions of *The Sixth Sense* series under the *Night Gallery* title. To maintain continuity, new paintings had to be done for each *Sixth Sense* episode. With Wright gone to other projects, it was fitting that Jaroslav Gebr was chosen for the task.

Since then, Gebr's paintings have also been seen in numerous TV shows and movies, including *Battlestar Galactica*, *The Sting*, and the recent expanded version of *Dune*.

Tom Wright has moved into directing, and has done episodes of such TV series as *Max Headroom*, and the 1986 revival of *The Twilight Zone* ("The Convict's Piano" and "The Toys of Caliban"), as well as two movies, *Torchlight* and an upcoming film featuring wrestling star Hulk Hogan.

And how have the paintings fared?

Gebr's "man on the cross" painting hangs in his office at Universal, along with the Kiley insert painting. Gebr believes that the other paintings he did for "The Cemetery" and "Escape Route" are somewhere in the property department. His portrait of Joan Crawford, however, is no longer on the lot. "It must be in some private house someplace," he says.

As for the Wright paintings, the property department at Universal believes it has some forty or fifty of them left—although a recent visit there turned up only twenty-five paintings for sure.

Like most paintings done for use in TV or film, some of the *Night Gallery* paintings have been used as set dressing on other shows, and in that capacity, have been altered to fit the needs of those shows. But the unique nature of most of the paintings makes it difficult for them to be recycled, so they hang in a property-department warehouse for exhibit to tourists riding the trains on the Universal City Tour.

Nobody is certain where the rest of the paintings are. Wright was given a couple of them to keep, as was Jack Laird. But a large number of them were auctioned off for charity a few years ago; others, it appears, have just disappeared from the studio lot.

The sad result is that the whole *Night Gallery* collection will probably never again be gathered together under one roof—except, of course, in that timeless world of television reruns. ■

Night Gallery

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 49



HELL'S BELLS: Ted Flicker (right, with John Astin) not only wrote and directed the episode but played the Devil as well.

It opens with a woman driving down a dark road just before picking up a hitchhiker so, said Alves, "We actually moved the scenery. And then we did a thing with road signs where Curly had this idea of zooming in and then panning off, and it looked like they were actually moving."

This created a surrealistic look which Szwarc and Alves maintained with the sets. "We [had] this roadside inn that was sort of fragmented. It didn't have totally finished walls. It had neon signs hanging in limbo. It was a very sort of stylistic thing," said Alves. "I mean, you see that a lot now on MTV, but we're talking 1971, and for a prime time television series, I think it was sort of unusual."

Paired with "Midnight Never Ends" was another unusual offering—"Brenda," the story of a troubled girl who makes friends with a shambling creature seemingly made of moss and mud. Based on a story by Margaret St. Clair, this unsettling yet strangely moving episode about loneliness and growing up worked well thanks to the script by Douglas Heyes (writing under the pseudonym "Matthew Howard"), the acting of Laurie Prange, and the direction of Allen Reisner.

November 10 brought a quartet of tales that amply demonstrated how uneven *Night Gallery* could be. The evening opened strong with "The Diary," a sharp-edged Serling tale, directed by William Hale, about a diary that writes its own entries. A strong performance from Patty Duke and a particularly chilling twist ending helped make this a memorable episode.

This was followed by a blackout, "A Matter of Seman-

tics," distinguished only by its star, Cesar Romero. Following that was "Big Surprise" starring John Carradine as a crazy old man who dares some boys to dig in his yard and find a "surprise." Adapted by Richard Matheson from his own story, it's a trifle that was directed by Szwarc with a certain panache.

The evening ended with "Professor Peabody's Last Lecture," a ten minute in-joke for H. P. Lovecraft fans written by Laird and directed by Jerrold Freedman, another of *Night Gallery's* regular directors. As with the blackouts, the punchline was weak, but getting there was good fun, thanks in large part to Carl Reiner's performance.

"It was a thirteen-page script that we had to shoot in a day," said Freedman, "and we had to walk into an already existing set, which was really not right for this particular show. It was a classroom set and it should have been long and narrow; instead it was wide. It was basically just a question of letting Carl wait. Carl is a great guy, and at the end of the show, he gave me a box of Cuban cigars. I think they were Cuban; I know they were really good cigars. Great cigars."

The four episodes that aired November 17 were also of wildly varying texture and quality. The evening opened up with "House With Ghost," written and directed by Gene Kearney, based on a story by August Derleth. This modest ghost story and morality play starring Bob Crane, Jo Anne Worley, and Bernard Fox was followed by yet another blackout, "A Midnight Visit to the Blood Bank," again distinguished only by its star, Victor Buono.

The evening took a quantum jump for the better with "Dr.

Stringfellow's *Rejuvenator*," a classic episode written by Serling and directed by Freedman. It tells of a callous and cynical dealer of phony cure-all potions in the Old West who is finally brought to judgment for a lifetime of lies told to others and himself, and it represented Serling's writing at its best.

"I have a lot of good memories," Freedman says of the episode, in particular lauding the excellent cast—Don Pedro Colley, Murray Hamilton, Lou Frizzell, and Forrest Tucker in the title role. "Forrest was terrific to work with," Freedman said. "You know, you work with these guys that get stereotyped into stuff like *F Troop* and all, and you don't realize they really are good actors. And he was really a good actor."

"Dr. Stringfellow's *Rejuvenator*" was one example of the kind of story Serling wanted most to tell, character studies which merely hinted at the supernatural, while demonstrating that true horror—as well as redemption—is found within the human heart. It is also the kind of story Serling would begin to find *Night Gallery* turning away from.

SPEAKING OF THE DEVIL

The final offering that evening, "Hell's Bells," featured John Astin as a particularly unpleasant hippie who learns to his eternal dismay that one man's Heaven is another man's Hell. It was definitely fun to watch, but as it turned out not much fun for the director, Theodore J. Flicker, to make.

Flicker, who retired from Hollywood about six or seven years ago to write novels, directed a number of television shows and motion pictures, including *The President's Analyst*. (He also came out of retirement briefly to direct "Act Break" for the recent network *Twilight Zone*.)

When Jack Laird invited him to come work on *Night Gallery*, Flicker was pretty much "winding down" his television work to concentrate on movies, but *Night Gallery*, he said, "looked like fun." He was given two short stories to adapt—"Hell's Bells" by Harry Turner and "A Question of Fear" by Bryan Lewis, which he was also slated to direct along with a blackout, "Junior." First up were "Hell's Bells" and "Junior." Recalled Flicker, "I probably did [them] together in a day and a half."

Flicker, who started his career as an actor, also appeared in "Hell's Bells"—first with Laird and Kearney playing a trio of demons who torment Astin, and then later as the Devil himself. "I just thought that would be fun to play the Devil," he explained, "and I suggested, as long as I was in it, that we all be the demons, just to give it a little mystery."

But what started as a lark, soon caused tension between Flicker and cameraman Curly Lindon. The enormous contribution the talented, Oscar-and-Emmy-winning cinematographer made to *Night Gallery* has already been mentioned in previous articles. If Lindon liked a director, he gave invaluable suggestions that made the director's work easier and better. But even those who got along with Lindon knew he also had another side, aggravated by the fact he was seriously ill. Or, as Alves put it, "He was not the easiest person to work with."

"I want to tell you, when you act and direct, you really need your cameraman," said Flicker, who also had the added complication of the elaborate make-up. "I had to be made up in stages as I was directing. I could only be made up while they were lighting. Unlike an actor going to the dressing room and getting made up and coming on the set, I was on the floor; as you know, the director's never off the floor. So, they had a make-up chair right near the camera."

For some reason, this greatly irritated Lindon. "He decided to dislike me," Flicker said. "He couldn't stand it that there I was the director and I had the nerve to be sitting on the stage... getting my face painted red and horns put on my

head. He just resented the hell out of this director who had the nerve to write and direct and then act in [an episode]. He was so offended that I was doing all three things, and he kept saying it over and over again.

"As a director, I don't like cutting film a lot, I really prefer to shoot everything in masters. And he couldn't understand that. He was so angry at me for that—that I would stage a whole scene right up to almost the last foot of film in a magazine—[that] he'd say, 'Well, we don't have that much film in the magazine.' And I would say, 'Mr. Lindon, would you then get a fresh magazine that has a full load in it?' and he'd just go berserk. As a result of that experience, I said, no, I'm not going to direct any more of these."

This in spite of the fact that his favorite script was "A Question of Fear." Said Flicker: "I really wanted to direct that, I really knew how I wanted to shoot that. That would have been fun to do." But because Lindon was to be cameraman on that, Flicker opted out, and Jack Laird stepped in to direct.

"The Dark Boy" and "Keep In Touch—We'll Think of Something" were the featured episodes on November 24. By far the better of the two was "The Dark Boy," another fine adaptation by Halsted Welles, this time of an August Derleth story. Nicely directed by John Astin, it's the touching story of a young nineteenth-century teacher who encounters a boy's silent ghost in her rural schoolhouse.

"Keep In Touch," written and directed by Kearney, is about a man (Alex Cord) who is so desperate to discover if the woman he has been dreaming about (Joanna Pettet) is real, that he reports her description to the police on trumped-up charges to see who they find. It's an interesting premise that isn't explored fully enough, relying instead on an abrupt twist ending.

COMING UP

In the final month of 1971, *Night Gallery* presented two adaptations of stories by H. P. Lovecraft, whose work has been frequently adapted for the screen, but as a rule rather poorly. *Night Gallery* proved a happy exception, as we will discuss next issue. Please join us then for "Pickman's Model" and "Cool Air," as well as "Camera Obscura" (before and after the syndication editors got their hands on it), and also the first installment of all-new synopses and a special look at "The Messiah on Mott Street."



John Carradine gave three hapless lads a BIG SURPRISE.

THE MAN WHO LOVED CHRISTMAS

TZ FIRST



*The Children Were Nestled
All Snug in Their Beds....*

T

HERE ONCE WAS A MAN

who loved Christmas. Every Christmas Eve he loved to put on his bright red suit, fluff his bushy white beard, and load up his sack before taking off on his midnight travels. The sky was always clear, and the moon was full of magic. And he loved it. He loved the holiday music that floated through the air; he loved the twinkling lights that adorned the neighborhood streets. And he especially loved to see the wonderful expressions on the children's faces when they waited up for him.

Like little Debbie and Johnny Wilson, who tiptoed past their sleeping parents and snuck down to the warm parlor filled with ribbons and stockings and a big colorful tree. Suddenly they heard a strange sound coming from the fireplace, and saw a jolly looking man tumble softly into the room. He gave them a wink, beckoning the children to come closer as he reached into his wonderful sack. Their faces tilted up in delight, and then bewilderment, as the jolly looking man pulled out a gleaming axe. With one quick stroke, he sliced off both of their little heads. Tossing them into his sack, he set out for the next house. Humming a merry melody, a Christmas melody, for he was a man who loved Christmas. ■

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New Year's Eve Is a Time to Reach Out to One Another, to Lay Old Rivalries to Rest.

VINCENT PERIWINKLE, the new wine-tasting champion of Europe, followed his colleague, Maurice Duvalle, down the ancient stairway. The drunken revelry of a New Year's celebration echoed off into the darkness as they slowly descended the curving limestone stairs into the dark wine cellar.

"Well, it's good to see you have no hard feelings about losing your title, Maurice. And it's quite sporting of you to share one of your prized bottles with me in honor of my victory. You know of my weakness for rare vintages."

"It's my pleasure, Vincent."

"I'll admit, you did surprise me with your perceptive reading of that Cabernet Sauvignon. Really, Maurice, I didn't know you had it in you."

"Why, thank you, Vincent."

"But I'm afraid you can't fight destiny, ol' boy. You must face the facts; there's just no contest between yourself and me. My discerning palette was made for the grape. After all, the only reason you were champion last year is that I was abroad at the time."

"Of course," Maurice replied, his thick accent curling around the echoing gloom.

"So what is this special vintage you're so anxious to show me? I've never known you to have any skill in collecting fine wines before, Maurice, at least none that you could keep from drinking yourself."

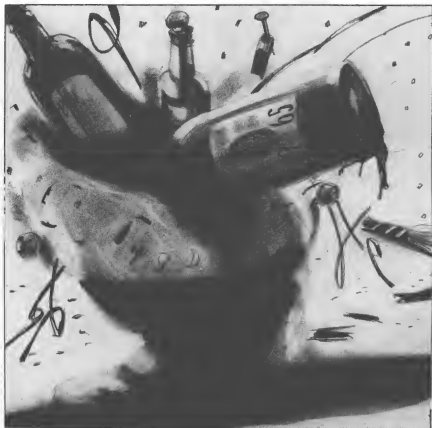
Maurice pulled a dusty bottle from the wooden rack in front of him and held it up to the dim light. There was twinkle in his eye.

"See, Vincent. A Bordeaux '65. A very good year."

"Oh, come now, Maurice. Even you know that '65 was a dreadful year for Bordeaux."

Maurice smiled and swung the heavy bottle across Vincent's face, crushing his skull. He gently replaced the wine in its rack and knelt over the twitching body.

"A bad year for the wine, perhaps. But a very good year for bottles." ■



A VERY GOOD YEAR

TZ FIRST



BEING LATE

TZ FIRST

**It Was a
Time of Danger,
a Time
of Courage,
a Time
of Change.**

I REMEMBER IT HAPPENED during the war on an icy night in the deep of winter. I was walking alone through the Black Woods. The moon hung full and yellow over the treetops, yet I was late. God, I hated being late, especially in those dangerous times.

My comrades were awaiting me at the appointed place, a small hollow hidden deep within the forest. Shadows danced in the thickening moonlight as I inched forward through the snow. And still I was late.

Then I heard the snap of a branch. Could I have been followed? I stopped quickly and tilted my head back, listening for the slightest movement.

Suddenly, a German soldier jumped out from behind a tree, jabbing his bayonet into my arm. I fell backwards, howling in pain. He laughed and raised the rifle to my forehead. Yes, his kind had killed many of my countrymen, calling us gypsies and vagrants, slaughtering us like cattle. No prisoners, no

mercy, no....

Something was moving in the woods. The German soldier lifted up his head, the broad smile vanishing from his face. For a moment a hush fell over the trees, and the world seemed frozen in the whistling wind. Suddenly a huge beast pounced from out of the darkness, ripping at the soldier's throat with drooling fangs. The soldier grabbed in vain for his rifle while the creature bit and tore at muscle and flesh. Tiny red fountains of blood spurted out onto the pale moonlit snow. Finally, the soldier stopped thrashing, his life's breath gurgling out of the jagged gash under his chin.

I looked down gratefully at the werewolf. And then at last I saw the hair rising on my arms and legs, the warmth of the moonlight finally changing my body into its natural form. And I began to feed on the fresh meat of the dead soldier. God, I hated being late, especially in those dangerous times. ■

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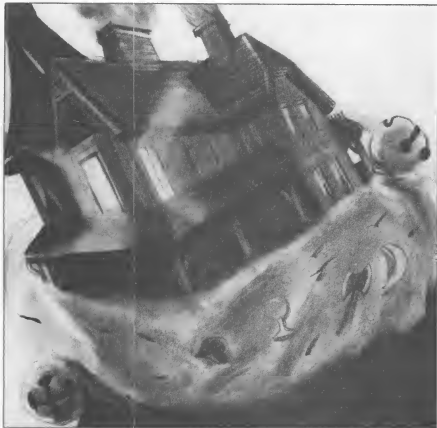
ENISE HUMMED QUIETLY

to herself as she gently laced the thick evergreen with a strip of brightly colored foil. Yes, it would make a fine Christmas tree when she was done with the trimming. All around her the parlor twinkled happily in the holiday decorations she'd so nimbly hung. Father would have loved it.

Denise leaned back on her hands, her melancholy eyes drinking in the warm memories that called to her from every room of the old estate. It seemed that even in his spare time Father was always building, always adding something new to the house to please her. Over the course of his distinguished career he had become one of the most celebrated industrialists of his time, erecting massive factories of smoke and steel and laying down iron railways that spanned continents. But for his loving daughter he had created a special world; a world of spacious conservatories delicately lined with windows of stained glass; of stately drawing rooms filled with first editions by the great authors; of elegant bedchambers, furnished with every conceivable luxury.

Still, her fondest thoughts were of the moments spent in the parlor. It was her father's private playroom, with its secret passageways and trapdoors, designed and built during the war when

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PRODIGAL SON

TZ FIRST

He'd Come Home at Last, at Christmastime,
to Claim His Father's Final Gift:

STOCKING STUFFERS

the threat of Nazi invasion seemed all too real. Being a mystery buff, Father had even put in a few hidden staircases and sliding bookshelves of his own, just to amuse himself and his daughter. Oh, how he had delighted in surprising her. And for all these years it had just been the two of them, just her and Father, living like selfish children in a golden palace.

Not that Father had been selfish when it came to others. Far from it. After making his fortune and providing for his family, Father had set up numerous charitable foundations for the poor, the disabled, for those who could not help themselves. Yes, Father had been a generous man, to his community, to his friends, and to his children... even to those who did not return his affection.

Outside, the snow fell with a whisper against the frosted windows. Denise shivered at the thought of spending her first Christmas Eve alone. Worse than alone, because she knew that *he'd* be coming home tonight. Of all the nights in the year, he had picked this one to announce his return. And she despised him for that. He knew how much the holiday meant to her and Father. Christmas symbolized everything they had held dear: charity, friendship, good will toward their fellow....

Bong! Bong!

Denise was startled out of her daydream by the hollow chiming of the doorbell. She stood up slowly, her legs stiff from the kneeling and bending necessary to decorate a Christmas tree to its fullest. She gave them one good stretch, and then started down the long hallway toward the foyer.

So he had arrived, just as he had promised her over the phone that afternoon. She could picture his smug face waiting for her outside the door. Waiting to wipe out all the happiness she and her father had built up over the last thirty years.

Or would he? As she reached for the doorknob, a small glimmer of hope settled into the back of her mind. What if she was wrong? What if he had changed? After all, it *was* Christmas. And by nature, Denise was an optimist. She'd even taken one of her favorite portraits of Father and wrapped it up brightly as a present for him. Perhaps Father's death had stirred up some long-buried guilt; perhaps he now felt a need to reaffirm family ties....

The door swung open, and she saw the smug face hanging in front of her in the icy air.

Denise smiled warmly. "Welcome home, Peter. Merry Christmas."

Peter said nothing at first, his eyes

glancing at the fresh wreath of holly that hung merrily on the door. A snarl spread over his thin lips.

"Get this blasted weed off of my door!"

He grabbed the wreath with a gloved hand and flung it viciously out into the yard. Denise's heart sank.

"Excuse me," he grunted, pushing his way past her into the house. "Well, well, Denise. I see you're still busying yourself with all these childish decorations. I'm afraid they'll all have to go, every one of them."

Peter stripped off his gloves, slapping them rhythmically into his open palm as he strolled down the hall. His eyes surveyed each room he passed like an appraiser's might before auction.

"I hate how you've kept this place. I'm going to have to redo everything."

Denise shivered, shaking off the shock of her brother's entrance. She closed the door and quickly followed him as he made his way to the parlor.

"My God, a Christmas tree. How quaint. How *fatherly*. How disgusting! It's really disappointing to see that after thirty years nothing has changed around here, Denise. Even after his death, Father's foolish ideas still pollute this house."

"I have a Christmas present for you, Peter," Denise offered, desperately trying to change the tone of the conversation. "It's right over there by the fireplace. I think you'll really..."

Peter raised his hand up and Denise fell silent. There was something in his eyes she didn't like, something about his manner, something very disturbing.

"Isn't that sweet. Well I have a Christmas present for you too, Denise." He hissed when he spoke her name, as though it left a bad taste in his mouth. "This is no longer your house. It's mine, and mine only."

"Wha... what are you talking about?" Denise stood there stunned, as though someone had just pulled the world out from under her feet.

Peter strolled casually over to the picture window, appearing to ignore the question. Then, barely able to contain his glee, he spun around and triumphantly broke the news.

"I've just spent the afternoon at the lawyers settling Father's accounts. And as I was going through the papers, much to my surprise, I discovered that he'd failed to properly make out his last will and testament. The lawyers were quite at a loss for words. They were certain a will had existed that evenly divided the estate up between the two of us. But, inexplicably, the document had vanished.

▼

***"And now, my darling
stepsister, I suggest that
you start packing," Peter
hissed. "Oh, and by the
way—Merry Christmas."***

▲

No copies, I'm afraid." He paused for a moment, his thin lips stretching into a broad smile.

"And by the strangest coincidence, the papers that certified your adoption by Father have also disappeared. That means there's no longer any way to prove he was your legal guardian. So according to law, I become the sole heir. You see? Now don't waste your breath, Denise. I've gone over the ledgers with a fine-toothed comb. There are no loopholes for you or those damned charity foundations to slip through. In fact, I could have finished disassembling the entire estate this afternoon if it hadn't been for this blasted holiday sending everyone home early. But, no matter. What's one more day? Speaking of which, I want you packed up and out of here by tomorrow morning or I'll have the police come in here and arrest you for trespassing. Understood?"

Peter took a deep breath, puffing his chest out like a proud rooster that had just laid claim to its territory.

"Out of here by tomorrow? But it's Christmas!"

B Y A L A N S P E R O



He didn't reply.

"You can't do this, Peter! It's not fair! I've spent the last thirty years caring for this old house, and for Father. And all this time you never visited, never wrote, not even when he was dying! And now, from out of nowhere, you just parade in here and tell me you're going to throw it all away? You can't! I won't let you!"

"I'm afraid I can, Denise. Unless the earth suddenly opens up and swallows me, I'm Father's only living blood relative. And in lieu of a will, I inherit everything. That's the law, you know." Peter began to pace arrogantly around the room.

"You see, there are some advantages to being the *natural born* heir of a great philanthropist, Denise. You inherit something more *important* than just a comfortable life. You inherit instincts, the instincts that Father used to amass his fortune, long before his money was ever given away to libraries and hospitals. The *killer* instinct, for one, which is something you sadly lack, Denise. Because if you had it you'd know that

fairness has nothing to do with how our family made its fortune; it never did.

"And now, my daring *stepsister*, I suggest that you start packing." Peter glanced with distaste at the colorful tree blinking cheerfully in the corner of the room. "Oh, and by the way, Denise, Merry Christmas."

Denise stood like stone; her worst fear had been realized. Even worse than the worst. Not only was Peter going to desecrate her home and leave her penniless, he was going to destroy all the foundations for the poor and needy that Father had spent a lifetime building up. And all just for spite, just to feel superior. Just to achieve whatever twisted pleasures Peter always experienced when he did the nastiest thing possible. Denise had been right. Peter *had* changed; he'd changed for the worse. And the worst thing of all was that he was going to do it all on Christmas.

Denise couldn't bear the thought of it. Her eyes followed her brother as he strutted around the warm parlor, her father's parlor, examining the wonderful old furniture with the cold gaze of a tax

inspector. He would change everything, ruin the estate, and there was nothing in the world she could do to...

Then, slowly, a strange thought crept into her mind, like a cat padding gingerly across an ice-covered pond. Something that Father had once told her. Something from long ago.

Peter stepped into the dead center of the room; the victorious rooster surveying his domain. Denise watched him standing there, staring blissfully out the picture window at the rolling hills of the estate, *his* estate. Standing there without a care in the world. Standing *there*...

And then she remembered.

"Peter."

Her calm voice, cutting through the silence of the snowfall outside, startled him. But he didn't move.

"What is it?"

"May I still give you your Christmas present?"

Peter couldn't stop the smile from creasing his lips. Here she was, facing total disaster at his own hands, and his poor addle-brained stepsister still wanted to give him a present. The trickle of pity he felt rising in his gut made him nauseous, but Peter decided he might as well humor her this one time. After all, he had nothing to lose, and she had just lost everything.

"You're truly haunted by the ghost of Christmas past, aren't you, Denise? Oh, very well. You may give me my Christmas present."

Denise turned and moved quickly to the fireplace, but her hands skimmed over the brightly wrapped package that lay on top of the mantel, and instead touched one of the diamond-shaped oak panels. It gave a bit as her fingers positioned themselves.

"Oh, come on now, Denise," Peter huffed impatiently. "Stop dawdling and give me my present."

Denise pressed firmly down on the panel, setting the ancient springs into motion. Whump! The floorboards swung open. For an instant, Peter's face hung white and motionless in the air; the proud rooster frozen in its tracks by the sudden cunning of the fox. And then he was gone, arms flailing, as he disappeared into the dark abyss.

Denise stepped gingerly over to the center of the room and peered down into the blackness.

"Merry Christmas, Peter," she chimed, as the floorboards snapped securely back into place. Denise grabbed a handful of ornaments and, humming quietly to herself, walked over to the evergreen to finish the trimming. ■

TELESCOPE, SAXOPHONE

and the

PILOT'S DEATH

There once was a pilot who could no longer voyage, who met a sculptor who could no longer create. Apart, each was adrift, but together there might be enough magic for one more journey. . . .



These things happened to me in 2138. Five years and several previous attempts at writing about them have gone by, but it is only recently that I've more fully understood what they really meant to me, to my life, to my art.

I still live in the same apartment I lived in then. It's on the top floor, the fifth, of a brick and wood building. There are two large rooms, and a kitchen with a stained porcelain sink, cracked counter tile, and cold water from both taps. The recycler no longer works. Hot water does run in the bathroom, which has toilet, sink, and a small wall shower. I keep a garden on the balcony facing away from the launch fields, over the street. Rent is low because the port facilities—launch pads, repair sheds, maintenance hangars, warehousing units, ►

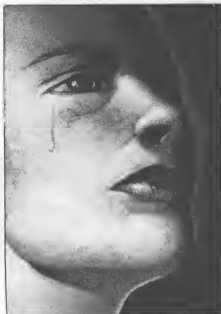
by **RICHARD PAUL RUSSO**

■
ILLUSTRATION BY **DARRYL LIGASAN**





TELESCOPE, SAXOPHONE



"I'll be here in this city until I die," she said.

"I won't travel in space again. I refuse. Not that it matters. Soon they won't allow me on a ship anyway, even as a passenger."

gantries, terminal arms, subterranean rail systems—begin a block away; the noise level is extremely high, the air quality low. Still, the garden thrives.

The space port is the main reason I live here. Day and night a constant ring and clatter, small explosions and high whines, pounding and grating of metal against metal, all fill the air, periodically overwhelmed by a series of sirens followed by the massive rumbling and roar of a rocket launch that shakes the walls of this building, and vibrates the air for several minutes.

I cannot sleep without the noise.

I AM AN ARTIST, A CRAFTSMAN, A HACK, or a fraud, depending on who you listen to. I produce welded sculptures from pieces of debris I collect on the grounds of the port, often from inside the hangars or sheds. Though they vary in size, and shape, and function, and condition, all are pieces either from space vehicles—the freight or troop ships, the streamlined passenger liners, the smaller, more numerous shuttles—or from the machines that service and maintain them.

At night, on the roof of this building, directly above my apartment, I weld the pieces of debris together in the light of the moon, in the glow from the space port, and I construct my sculptures, large and small, creating abstract representations of humanity's accelerated expansion through the galaxy.

FOR RELAXATION, I PLAY THE SAXOPHONE.

BEFORE I MET HER, I HAD MADE very few sculptures. I had started dozens, but was unable to finish most of them. And I had not completed a new sculpture in almost a year.

I earned my living at the space-port, changing jobs once or twice a year when I grew bored. I was proficient at almost everything, and the Port Authority accommodated me, shifting me from position to position, retraining me at each new job; when emergencies arose, and they regularly did, the Port Authority knew it could call on me to fill in with whatever needed to be done.

It was during an emergency that I met her. One of the two loaders for a troop ship had broken down less than three hours before launch; the soldiers were already webbed into their compartments, but crates of weaponry, uniforms, and shock equipment still waited in the loading caverns, and the one working loader would not be able to get

it all aboard in time. With the threat of a Port Authority launch cancellation for the delay, the troop ship's sponsoring corporation sent a call out through the entire port for temp-jobbers to help with manual loading. Extravagant wages for two and a half hours' work were offered, and by the time I reached the loading caverns, nearly forty people had assembled, and supervisors were already forming teams for each quadrant station.

I was assigned to a five-unit team, and our supervisor led us quickly through the maze of corridors to our station. One of the other jobbers in the team was a woman in the dark blue uniform of a starship crew. As we hurried along the dimly lit tunnels, I saw the glint of the Pilot insignia on her shoulder.

For the next two and a half hours we were all too busy to think about anything but our supervisor's rapidly shouted commands. Muscles strained, machinery groaned, sweat poured freely, lungs ached and burned in the parched heat, obscenities punctuated the supervisor's instructions.

An hour into the work, the ignition sequence began, urging the others on; but in me it evoked a fleeting paralysis, a surge of adrenaline, and a block of tension in my chest—I wanted to be on that ship. Any ship.

We completed our station's loading and sealed the holds seven minutes before ignition, then ran through the passageways, our supervisor securing portals behind us as we went. Back in the central cavern, a few other teams had already arrived. I stood by the pilot, and exchanged a few words with her as we waited.

At scheduled ignition, the controller locked on a firing hold, and we waited for the last two teams; overhead the ten-minute launch-delay timer began to count off. A minute later one of the teams came in, and quiet descended on the cavern. The timer flashed green liquid light at us.

The smiles and shouts broke out as the final team stumbled in, one man limping badly, and the last portal was secured with three and a half minutes remaining. The controller unlocked the firing hold, and the ship's engines roared to life.

I HAVE THREE TELESCOPES MOUNTED ON THE roof of this building. One is used to observe the orbital stations and habitats, one to track shuttles and the moon. The third I use exclusively for watching launches from the port. This third telescope is fitted with mountings for a

variety of cameras; with them, I take pictures of the troop, passenger, or freight rockets that will be converted to starships in orbit above me. I capture on film those ships destined to go where I never will.

WE WERE PAID IMMEDIATELY AFTER the emergency landing, and in currency rather than credit, so we rode underground trams to the corporation cashier (I don't remember now which corporation's troop ship we had loaded). I sat next to the pilot, and we introduced ourselves. I knew that most of the jobbers would stick together, celebrating success in the terminal bar, with the first two rounds paid for by the corporation. I asked the pilot if she would join us, though I knew protocol forbade it.

She declined, then told me this was her first time grounding in this port, and asked if I knew a good place to eat, and a clean place to sleep. I named a nearby restaurant, asked if I could join her at dinner, and was surprised when she said yes. We collected our pay, and left the terminal.

HER NAME WAS TAYLOR VALARENTO. SHE stood an inch taller than me at six-foot-one, was trim and muscular, strong and agile, with the arc-light reflexes needed by a pilot. Her age was thirty-nine standard years.

Gray had begun to appear in her black hair, which was thick, not quite straight, and fell just below her shoulders. Her nose had apparently been broken several times, so there was a slight kink to it. And her eyes, which were deep, dark brown, and flecked with stars of gold, were lined and bruised, and at times seemed to be gazing into some other world.

I LED THE WAY CIRCUITOUSLY AMONG THE maintenance hangars and repair sheds nearest the launch sites. The sun had set, and red, green, and amber lights outlined gantries and buildings that jutted into the purpling sky. I spotted a small, twisted bit of metal under the lip of a shed wall, knelt, and picked it up. I felt certain it was from a rocket, though it was unrecognizable.

"What is it?" Taylor asked.

"A stellar talisman." I slipped it into the insulated pocket of my coveralls.

"Really." She smiled, shaking her head.

I shrugged, and we walked out of the port.

TALISMANS.

Perhaps I should have given it to Taylor that night. If anyone needed a magical charm, she did.

At dinner, she told me she had been permanently grounded. Which meant she would never pilot a starship again. Which meant her occupation, her life, had finally caught up with her, as it did with all pilots. Which meant she was dying.

Although I did not know the name of the disease, I knew what was killing her. Like all pilots, after ten to fifteen years of guiding starships through the holes and tunnels of the universe, of interfacing her own neural network with that of a starship, she had begun to suffer from an irreversible, degenerative disease of the central nervous system. I don't understand the specifics of the condition; progressive destruction of the myelin sheathing is a major part of it, but there is much more.

What I did understand, though, was that she would slowly die from it. I also knew she would spend days, or weeks, completely incapacitated, a disconnected mind without control of a withering body, incapable of the simplest voluntary actions.

I was afraid she would want to spend that time, the last days of her life, with me.

But she fascinated me. I had always wanted, desperately, to travel to the stars. Taylor had not only been capable of traveling between worlds, she had guided the massive starships on their time- and space-distorting voyages. While I could barely tolerate the short trip to one of the orbital stations.

I had made the trip just once, years before, the entire journey spent in a state of irrational, uncontrollable panic that left me drained and almost non-functional. The trip back was possible only with heavy sedation, and I was unable to work for several days afterwards.

Still, I wanted to go to the stars, and did not give up trying. I went through the tests after that trip, though I knew what the results would show. My classification—NIIT. Neurologically Incapable of Interstellar Travel. It became official—I would never go.

Throughout the rest of the meal I watched her closely, searching for some sign of the disease—a tic in her face, a tremor in her fingers, anything. But I saw nothing I could be sure of.

I'm certain she knew I was watching her; she had to expect it after telling me. Still, she did not seem disturbed by it, almost as if she wanted me to watch, either to prove the diagnosis wrong... or to confirm it.

AFTER DINNER, I TOOK HER TO A small hotel just a few blocks from the apartment, one I knew was at least clean and secure, if not luxurious. I gave her my address and com number, told her to call if she needed anything.

"I'll be here in this city until I die," she said. "I won't travel in space again. I refuse. Not that it matters. Soon they won't allow me aboard a ship anyway, even as a passenger." She laughed, nodded to me. "I'm sure we will see much of each other. Probably more than either of us really wants."

After a long silence, I said good-night, and returned to my apartment.

The piece of metal I had picked up in the port was still in my pocket. It was small and damaged. Talisman. I took it up to the roof, tossed it into one of the crates half filled with other debris.

I sat on the roof a long time in the darkness, watching the lights of the port. It seemed strange to me then that she was dying because she was capable of doing what I had wished all my life for, knowing it was impossible.

A FEW DAYS AFTER WE'D FIRST MET, I STOPPED by her hotel to take her to an exhibition being held in the basement gallery that carried two or three of my sculptures. I had sold only one sculpture at the time, but Renaut, the gallery owner, liked what few pieces I had done, and made room for them. Taylor was ready when I arrived, but we never made it to the gallery.

On our way down the stairs from her floor, Taylor lost control of her legs. They buckled under her, she collapsed, one hand gripped the railing, and I managed to grab her with both hands before she pitched down the steps. I helped her back up the stairs, then to her room and into a chair.

After a while, feeling returned to her legs, she regained control of them, but she did not want to leave the room. She promised we would see the exhibition another day.

"I won't be able to stay here much longer," she said. She stared at her hands as though she expected them to begin shaking. "I can't expect the hotel staff to take care of me, and there are going to be times when I will need..." She hesitated a long time, still staring at her hands. "...to be taken care of."

"Where will you go?" I asked.

"She looked up from her hands.

"Where will I go?" she repeated.

SHE STAYED IN THE HOTEL ANOTHER WEEK, then I set up a sleeping mat in the front

TELESCOPE, SAXOPHONE

room of the apartment among the bookshelves, and she moved in.

I TAUGHT HER TO PLAY THE SAXOPHONE. What was usually most difficult, learning the lip pressures, lung and throat movements, the breathing methods to produce a clear sound, came easily to her. From the start she had a natural feel for the instrument, for the pained and mournful sound she could bring out of it. She spent hours every day, when she was capable of it, practicing, both while I worked and when I was at home. Before long, she played far better than I. When I play the saxophone now, it is partially her voice that emerges.

OFTEN I WOULD RETURN TO THE APARTMENT after a work shift, and Taylor would be seated on the mat with her back against the wall, reading in the light from a lamp on one of the bookcases. Usually there were several books beside her, sometimes as many as ten or twelve, open or marked with strips of paper.

"I've never read so much," she explained. "Occasionally, during slack times, I would take in books through the ship information banks, but it's not the same. I don't know why I need to read so much now." She shrugged, and smiled. "Perhaps I am preparing myself for the final voyage." Then she laughed and shook her head.

One day, however, when I returned, Taylor was curled against the wall, crying. Thirty or forty books were scattered about the room, some with torn pages, others bent from striking walls or furniture.

She looked up, grabbed the nearest book, and weakly threw it at me. It fell short, just past the foot of the mat.

"I can't read any more," she said. She breathed in heavily, stared at me. "I can't read a damn thing."

WE BOTH IGNORED THE ATTACKS in the early stages, when they were brief, and relatively mild. But as the disease progressed, as the attacks became more frequent, the tremors in her limbs more pronounced, the duration of the episodes longer, the disease became impossible to ignore.

Physicians had prescribed various medications which were supposed to help control the symptoms, but the drugs seemed to have little, if any, effect. Taylor often went for days without taking any of the medication, and with no noticeable change in the symptoms.

She apparently knew in detail what she could expect—the full range of possible symptoms, how long they might

last—but she never told me any of it. I was unable to force myself to do any research on my own, and felt as if I was walking through the darkened network of passageways in the caverns below the space port, unaware of how many corridors existed, where they were, or what they contained. Mood swings, tremors, temporary paralysis, and a dozen other symptoms both mild and severe, occurred apparently at random, and I became obsessed with trying to predict which symptom would next manifest itself. I was almost never correct.

IN MY GARDEN I GROW LINKVINES, WHICH climb up the walls and over the edge of the roof, as well as several varieties of tubers which, in this environment, do quite well. I give all the edible food away.

THE FIRST TIME SHE BECAME COMPLETELY incapacitated, lying helpless on the mat and unable to move, though her limbs shook constantly with the tremors, I sat at the foot of the mat and watched her. I moved two lamps so their light fully illuminated her face and body.

Though she was awake, she was unaware of my presence until more than an hour passed and her gaze accidentally fell directly upon me. She became agitated, and her mouth opened and closed, a fish out of water, choked sounds emerging. The sounds became more intelligible as she continued, and I leaned forward, listening. Eventually I was able to understand her.

"What...are you doing? Waiting for me to...die?"

She closed her eyes, exhausted from the effort.

"No," I told her. "I'm trying to understand what you're going through. I'm trying to imagine what it feels like."

A stuttered groan welled up from her, and she managed to roll her head from side to side. Again she struggled to get out a few words.

"Impossible...bastard. Go away, please, just leave me..."

I remained in the chair, watching.

"DO YOU HAVE ANY REGRETS?" I ASKED HER once.

"Of course I have regrets. I'm still young, and I don't want to die. But questions like that don't really apply, or shouldn't. Neither the questions nor the answers can change anything. I became a pilot, freely and willingly, and I am dying because of it. That's all there is."

"SOMETIMES I RETURN TO THE STARS," SHE

said after a long episode of several days during which she'd had no control of her body. I'd fed her, cleaned her, watched over her. "Call them visions, dreams, hallucinations, it doesn't matter. I feel I am jacked into a starship once again, my senses changed, transformed in a way... I don't know, I can't... it's indescribable." She laughed and shook her head, and drank from the water glass in her hand.

"It's not always like that, is it? You don't always feel as if you've returned to the stars."

"No. If I did, it would be all right."

"What do you feel then?" I asked her. "When you're lying on the mat, paralyzed? When your mind is here, when you're aware of your body, but without any control?"

Her face twisted, in pain or anger, and she threw the glass at me. I ducked, but it struck the side of my head, cracking before it hit the floor and shattered. I put my hand to my forehead, felt blood.

"Why do you ask me that, you bastard? Why not let it be? It's agony. Not just physical pain, it's helpless frustration and burning and..." She clenched her fists, unable to go on, and pounded at her thighs. "No, it's nothing, nothing at all, no pain, just a dream, a dream... nothing..."

She sat without moving, looking at me, but her gaze seemed unfocused, or focused on something far in the distance, though the wall was only a few feet behind me. "I feel nothing," she said, and I could see that at least at that moment, it was true.

OFTEN AT NIGHT SHE WOULD GO UP TO THE roof and spend hours with the telescopes, watching not the orbital stations, nor the moon, nor the shuttles, not even the huge rockets launching from the port, but instead gazing into the vast open night skies, and the thousands of visible stars above.

FOR SEVERAL DAYS SHE BECAME BLIND in HER left eye. Her vision in the eye blurred, then darkened, and finally disappeared altogether within three or four hours. It did not greatly disturb her, and she waited, with some anticipation, for the vision in her right eye to fade as well. It did not, however, and when the vision in her left eye returned, Taylor seemed disappointed, as though she had looked forward to spending the remaining weeks of her life completely blind.

"THERE ARE NO FRIENDSHIPS AMONG PILOTS," she told me. "We are all too jealous of

what we have, unsure if what we experience is the same for other pilots, and envious of the possibility that what other pilots experience is somehow superior. We are, all of us, insecure. It is absurd. We should find fellowship, and comfort, in the fact that we all die the same slow, horrible deaths."

DURING THE LAST FEW WEEKS, OUR RELATIONSHIP, which until then had not been at all sexual, became intensely so. I had not expected the change, but I was not surprised by it.

Taylor took advantage of her lucid, controlled periods to initiate sessions of desperate, intense lovemaking, often marked by self-inflicted pain—an attempt, she told me, to confirm her continued existence. Sometimes she bit her lip, hard enough to draw blood which, when mixed with her tears, was salty to the taste. At other times she dug her nails into her own skin until she tore the flesh and shuddered with the pain.

I was not happy with the change. I was afraid of our growing intimacy, afraid that it would make her death that much harder for me to face, the grief that much more intense.

But she was dying, and I could not deny her.

WHEN SHE LAY HELPLESS ON THE MAT, awake and unable to move, sometimes shaking with mild or severe tremors, I sat beside her and played the saxophone. The music calmed her, seemed to ease the tremors, and on occasion brought on a peaceful sleep. As she slept, I would play on, watching her, wondering what images filled her dreams.

ONE NIGHT, WHILE TAYLOR STILL HAD enough control to play, we went up onto the roof. The moon was not up, and the only illumination came from the dim glow of streetlamps below us and from the multicolored blinking lights of the space port. Stars flickered softly above us. Taylor sat on the edge of the roof with the saxophone between her legs, her feet dangling over the street.

"Build something," she said to me. "A sculpture." She waved at my tools, the crates of metal.

"I can't," I said. "I told you, I can't seem to do it anymore; I can't finish anything."

She looked at me, then up at the night sky, shook her head. "You want to go to the stars."

"I can't do that either," I reminded her.

She turned back to me. "Then bring

the damn stars to *you*." She paused. "I'll help." She brought the saxophone close to her mouth. "Create," she said. "Create a sculpture with twisted metal, and I will create a sculpture with twisted sound."

So I tried. I sifted through the crates of metal debris, picking out one or two pieces from each crate, collecting them all by the welder, along with several sections of scrap metal sheeting.

Sirens cut the air, and Taylor matched each blast with a painful cry from the saxophone. She stopped playing when the sirens quit and the rumbling began. We could just see the ship in the distance, barely visible pillars of smoke rising from underground vents.

"Create," Taylor said again.

But I waited until the air began to shake and roar, and the ship rose slowly, slowly from its pad. I fitted the mask to my head, dropped the face plate, and flipped on the welder. As the blue-white flame sprang to life, Taylor turned away and began to play.

For four and a half hours we worked on the roof, creating, and Taylor did indeed twist sound with the saxophone, as if it was being torn from her. I wondered where she found the strength and control to play for so long. Inside herself, of course; but also, I felt, from the stars.

As for me, I had never worked so

intensely before. I listened to Taylor, to the music that came from her, listened to the roar of rocket launches, looked at the stars and the moon and watched the flaming tails of spaceships rising into the night. I took all that into me, and poured it all back out into the metal and blue-white flame of the welder.

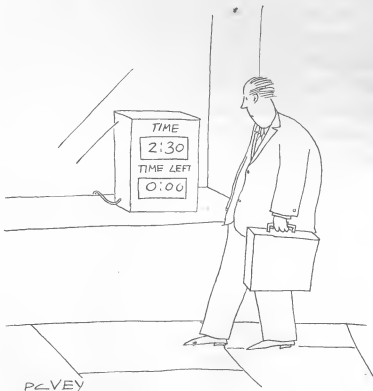
When we finished, I had produced a massive jungle of twisting metal vines and trees, unlike anything I had made before. Taylor came over, titled it for me.

"Heart of a Pilot," she said.

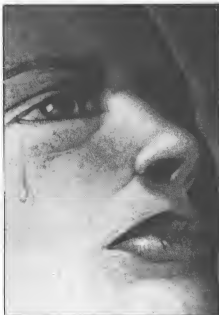
It was the first of what came to be called the "Pilot Series" sculptures. I'd begun to work again.

SOMETIMES, USUALLY AT NIGHT, I climb on the roof, along with my saxophone. I sit amidst the twisted and broken metal rejects from rockets and shuttles and starships and complex machinery, amidst the welding equipment and the telescopes, and I wait for the launch of a ship. When the sirens first cut through the air, I begin to play, a solo accompaniment to the sirens, and then to the roar of ignition and the ship's driving thrust into space.

"I WILL BE COMPLETELY HELPLESS BEFORE LONG," Taylor said. We were at the port, on the outskirts of the launch fields. Dusk



TELESCOPE, SAXOPHONE



For hours we worked, creating, and Taylor did twist sound with the saxophone, as if it was being torn from her. I wondered where she found the strength; inside herself, of course; but also, I felt, from the stars.

and colored lights lit the air. We were collecting debris for my sculptures. "I must not reach that point. My life has to end first." She stooped, picked up a tiny piece of metal, held it out. "Another talisman," she said, smiling briefly. Her fingers trembled, as they always did now. "I'll need your help."

I had expected it. I had planned to help her with whatever she needed. But I had not imagined the manner in which she wished to die.

Sirens warned of an impending launch and we stood at the edge of the open fields, watched smoke roll up from the underground vents around the distant ship. The rolling explosion began, intensified, then the ship rose, and flame appeared at its tail, hot and bright in the growing darkness.

"There." She pointed at the rocket. "I want to die in those flames. I want to be cremated by a ship headed for the stars."

I turned to her, and started to smile until I saw the intensity of her expression, the glowing reflections in her eyes, and realized she was serious. I turned back to the ship and watched it rise into the night.

I STAND ON THE ROOF JUST AFTER MIDNIGHT, between launches when the port and the streets below are relatively quiet. I close my eyes. I relegate all sound to the background, white noise that gradually fades into nonexistence. Then I hold my arms out to the side, spread my feet slightly so no part of my body has contact with another. I stand motionless, without breathing, and I try to imagine what it must be like to lose all the normal senses, to become disembodied, and to soar blindly, yet unerringly, through the night between the stars.

SOON IT WAS TIME FOR ANOTHER journey through the caverns below the space port.

For nearly two days Taylor controlled the symptoms by force of will. She spoke without difficulty, the tremors were so mild I hardly noticed them, and she moved easily with me along the dim corridors. I accessed portals as we went, side-circuiting the monitor signals, leaving no trace of our passage. Taylor's face had a flush of life I had not seen in days, and for a moment I wondered at the possibility of remission; but I knew it was a false hope, and I rejected it.

We emerged into the dark chamber directly below the rocket. Looking up, we could see the massive thrusters above us, already leaking tendrils of smoke.

The silence of the corridors was replaced by a heavy hiss and a steady ticking surrounded by a low hum. The chamber was warm, the air stifling. I checked my watch. Little time remained.

"How are you doing?" I asked.

She smiled, held out her hand. It was nearly still. I held out my own, and it shook worse than hers. We both laughed quietly for a moment.

"Don't. . . . It will be instantaneous," she said. "I'll feel no pain."

I nodded. We embraced, both our bodies trembling slightly.

"You should have brought the saxophone," she said. Still smiling.

She moved out to the middle of the chamber, knelt on the metal floor, then turned to me.

"You'd better go. There's not much time." An intense spasm shuddered through her, then passed. She lay on her back, gazing up at the thrusters. Smoke drifted about her. She smiled.

I stepped to her, dropped to my knees and kissed her lightly on the forehead. "Good-bye," I said.

"Good-bye." She took my hand, squeezed, then released it. Her gaze returned to the ship above her.

I left the chamber and hurried through the passageways, securing portals behind me as I went. We had cut the time short to prevent discovery, and the sirens began while I still moved along the corridors.

When I knew I was safe, I secured one last portal, then stopped and pressed against the passage wall. As the roar began, I felt the vibration of the walls pass through my body. The sound increased, a roaring in my ears, and with a terrible ache in my chest I shook with the walls around me as the ship blasted away from the chamber and into the sky above.

OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS, I PRODUCED the Pilot Series sculptures, one after another. *Pilot Dancing*, *Pilot in Camouflage*, *The Pilot's Interstellar Dream*. I produced twenty or twenty-five in all, all leading toward one final piece, which took me months to create. Then, freed, I moved on to other subjects.

The final sculpture in the series is in two parts. From one half of the base rise two tall, spindly projections of welded metal debris, one with a tilted crossbar, the other with a bulbous cone at its foot. On the other half of the base rests a flat and shiny, fused pool of metal.

I titled the sculpture *Telescope, Saxophone, and the Pilot's Death*.

It is not for sale. ■

TRULY WEIRD GIFTS

Compiled by Jillian Smith

SPECIAL GIFT
HOLIDAY GIFT
SECTION



STARSHIP EARTH: A must for any celestial fanatic. This unusual globe will unlock the mysteries of the heavens. Over one thousand stars decorate the outer globe, complete with name, Greek letter designation, distance in light years, and magnitude. \$189.00 plus \$8.50 shipping. (Sharper Image)

COPYRIGHT © THE SHARPER IMAGE

**ED BRYANT'S
HOLIDAY GIFT BOOK
CHOICES
(PAGE 75)**

Every year it's the same. One morning you wake up to discover they've taken down the pumpkins and put up tinsel, and you're stuck at the last minute coming up with some uninspired gift that will soon be forgotten amid the cufflinks and cologne bottles and mail-order cheese logs. What's a true-blue Zoner to do?

This year it can be different. Here are a few truly weird gift suggestions to add another dimension to your holidays. We can't guarantee that everyone will like these gifts, but one thing is sure—they won't forget them!

For more information on how to find these and other truly weird gifts, please turn to page 74.



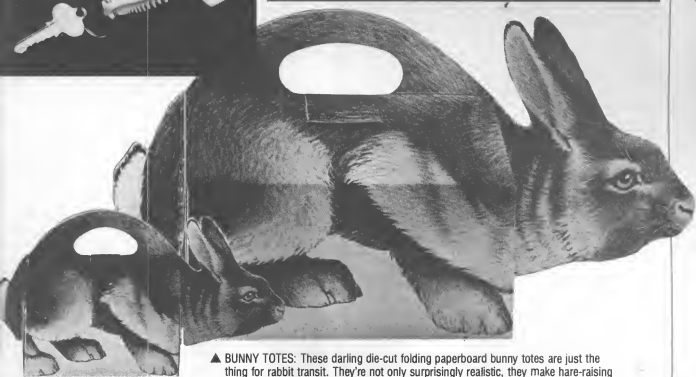
▲ **GIANT MUTANT PIRANHA:** Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the bathtub... here comes this life-size carnivorous playmate, with a mouthful of wickedly sharp teeth that can strip the flesh off a grown man in an eyeblink. \$34.95 plus \$3.95 shipping. (Nightmares International)

◀ **SOUND F/X CRYSTAL BALL:** No need to toss yarrow stalks or consult gull entrails anymore. Nossir! With a mere wave of the hand, this astonishing device will straighten out your life with one of twenty-eight preprogrammed oracular answers broadcast directly over your own hi-fi system! \$79.95 plus \$9.00 shipping. (SYNC)

BRAIN-EATING SNAKE: Not feeling up to snuff? Now you have the perfect excuse. Just say "Serpents devoured my cerebellum!"—and prove it! \$16.50 plus \$2.95 shipping. (Nightmares International)



▼ **SKELETON KEYCHAINS:** Bone up for the holidays with these versatile gifts, just perfect for holding your keys or adorning Christmas trees. \$1.75 plus .50 shipping. (Anatomical Chart Co.)



▲ **BUNNY TOTES:** These darling die-cut folding paperboard bunny totes are just the thing for rabbit transit. They're not only surprisingly realistic, they make hare-raising gift boxes as well. They come in sets of six small bunny boxes for \$11.70, four large boxes for \$15.80, or two each for \$11.95. (The Nature Company)

**SPECIAL
HOLIDAY GIFT
SECTION**

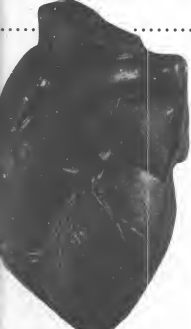
ANIMAL MASKS: Ever have ► the urge to jump up and break into a ceremonial dance, but you didn't have the right mask for the occasion? These hand-carved wooden ritual masks from scenic Sri Lanka are just the ticket. Priced from \$35-40.00 plus \$4.85 shipping. (Trifles)



▲ **EYE OF THE STORM:** Sure, the other kids have got their own Gas Plasma Electric Sculptures. But how many of them have sound responsive Gas Plasma Electric Sculptures? This 8" x 14" powerhouse, once priced at \$199.00, can now be yours for only \$119.00 plus \$6.50 shipping. (Sharper Image)

TURN OF THE SCREW: Amuse ► your friends and terrify your family with this striking Space Dart "makeup appliance." A steal at only \$14.95 plus \$1.95 shipping. (Nightmares International)





CHOCOLATE HEART: Say "My heart belongs to you!" Give the ultimate sacrifice: this lifelike human heart of solid milk chocolate. Great Valentine gift too! \$9.95 plus \$2.00 shipping. (Anatomical Art Co.)

BITE CHRISTMAS: You'll be right in style for those swank holiday parties with this eye-catching Eyeless Subterranean Creature mask. Just imagine it with a tuxedo! \$55.00 plus \$6.95 shipping. (Nightmares International)



A GUIDE TO TRULY WEIRD GIFT SHOPPING

By Jillian Smith

Let's face it. You and I are not normal people. Nonetheless, the holiday season is just as important to you and me as it is to everyone else. That's why I was determined to break out of the same old holiday rut I find myself in every year:

It's Christmas Eve and Dad and I are standing in a mob of bustling, frenzied idiots at the local mall. We desperately try to figure out what to buy for Mom. We settle on a five-pound bag of rose-scented potpourri. Christmas morning Mom opens the box (Dad and I are nervous as always) and she squeals in delight, thanking us profusely, and as soon as we are out of sight she shoves the bag under the bathroom sink behind the aerosols.

Well, no more! This year I've determined to get the family gifts that are as unique as they are. I can't wait to see the expression on their faces when they see what I've gotten them this year!

You're wondering how you go about finding these bizarre gifts for your loved ones. It's really a lot easier than it looks. Most five-and-ten-cent stores have a few weird gifts lurking among the mittens and mufflers. One of those dandy ceramic cow cream pitchers, for instance. Or a left-over inflatable bat from Halloween. And wouldn't those sterling silver skull earrings in the record store be just the right thing for your cousin Cindy? Well, maybe not—but I do have one other secret.

Catalogs, catalogs, and more catalogs! The items that appear on the preceding pages are only a small slice of the treasures I found leafing through

these unique guides for the reclusive shopper. Nearly every strange thing I could imagine (and some I couldn't!) I found by strolling the Weird Pages. Here are a few of my own favorites:

The Archie McPhee and Company Catalog is where you want to go if you're looking for high-quality, low-priced weirdness. This one is a gold mine. You won't flip more than a page or two before you find some treasure: Giant rats, glow-in-the-dark roaches, Frankie and Annette surfing action figures! The catalog copy alone will have you in stitches.

Good old Johnson Smith Company is still in business, and you can find the seriously demented here as well, although

The image shows a grid of various weird gifts from the Johnson Smith Company catalog. Each item is accompanied by a small illustration and a brief description. The items include a toaster, a light bulb, a clock, a pen, a small robot, and various other novelty items. The grid is organized into columns and rows, with each item having its own small section of text.

EXCERPT FROM THE JOHNSON SMITH COMPANY CATALOG

SPECIAL HOLIDAY GIFT SECTION

IN THE DARK!

STAR GLOW IN THE DARK
CONCEALED... You'll be really
impressed with the glow in the
dark. These of the prototype!
The effect is better in a museum
display than in a home setting.
They make a nice glowing spec-
tacular and are available in
greatly from \$1.99 to \$12.99.

NEW GLOW IN THE DARK
LIVERWORTS... You'll be
impressed with the glow in the
dark. These of the prototype!
The effect is better in a museum
display than in a home setting.
They make a nice glowing spec-
tacular and are available in
greatly from \$1.99 to \$12.99.

NEW GLOW IN THE DARK
KEYS... You'll be
impressed with the glow in the
dark. These of the prototype!
The effect is better in a museum
display than in a home setting.
They make a nice glowing spec-
tacular and are available in
greatly from \$1.99 to \$12.99.

GLOWS
IN THE
DARK!

you will have to wade your way through a few pages of "Fun to Wear" buttons and slogan tee shirts. What's so great about Johnson Smith is that you can still find all those terrific gadgets you thought were long gone—X-Ray Specs, Silly String, Magic Eight-Balls, and even (yes, it's true!) the Deluxe Sea Monkey Kit!

You can also find peculiar objects in the Worldwide Curio House Catalog, as well as a fine literature section of truly weird books on subjects ranging from Acupuncture to Zen. Here you'll discover fanciful ceramic dragons alongside their own Skull Kerosine

Lantern. You can also pick up a jar or two of their "Scientific Powders" or a couple of ounces of Noble Liverwort or Pissisewwa Herb.

For electronics freaks, there is The Complete Catalog of Amazing and Fantastic Devices, advertising Night Vision Scopes, Bug Detectors, Voice Scramblers, Homing Devices, and other gadgets to make you feel like a spy. The SYNC Catalog boasts "ingenious products in sync with the times." Which means we've got a lot of boring electric business and beauty aids. However, interspersed throughout are some suitably bizarre items: Talking Crystal Balls (the Eighties answer to the Magic Eight-Ball), the Laser FX Light Show, and even a New Age board game called Phenomenon. And The Sharper Image includes nifty talking bear-phones and plasma sculptures in with the usual Yup-ware.

The Nature Company Catalog is just what it sounds like—a collection of posters, mobiles, paperweights, baubles and trinkets, all inspired by (and sometimes made out of) the natural world. Most of it is too beautiful to be classified as truly weird, but a few items, such as the glowing salamanders and the cardboard bunny-totes are our kind of stuff.

The Anatomical Products Catalog is brilliant—pure serendipity. The catalog is a gift in itself. Every part of the body imaginable, and some not, internal or external, paper, plastic or plaster-

cast, removable, moveable, diseased, healthy, cross-sectioned or quarter-sectioned, models, charts, posters and books—even jewelry! Wouldn't Aunt Judy just die over a green spleen pendant to coordinate with her new blue pumps? You visceral types won't want to miss out on this one.

And speaking of viscera, Nightmares International is an absolute must for gore freaks. I gave you a taste of their stuff earlier, and, believe me, tasteful is what I was trying to be. Along with superb masks and appliances, they also have assorted stumps, innards and limbs, severed and otherwise, as well as fake butcher knives and straight razors and such with built-in blood reservoirs for aspiring filmmakers. If you're thinking of this stuff for your ten-year-old nephew, you might want to wait a decade or so. This collection is not for the queasy.

Finally, for those friends of yours who've crossed over from the truly weird into the paranoid or psychotic, here are two catalogs of books and pamphlets—Loompanics Unlimited and AMOK—each a cornucopia of dementia and esoterica. Please note: Certain people may find some of this subject matter exploitive, abusive, or downright offensive. Still, each performs the valuable—if somewhat frightening—underground service of connecting the lunatic fringe with its literature of choice.

TRULY WEIRD CATALOGS—HOW TO FIND THEM:

To get you started, I've included the following preliminary list. I also recommend *High Weirdness by Mail: A Directory of the Fringe—Mad Prophets, Crackpots and True Visionaries*, by Rev. Ivan Stang (founder of The Church of the Sub-Genius)—a mere \$9.95 from Fireside/Simon & Schuster. Don't worry if you have trouble finding more strange catalogs. Once your name gets on these mailing lists, you'll have more than you know what to do with. Please note that prices, charges, phone numbers, and addresses have a way of changing without notice, especially with the smaller outfits. It's a good idea to call or write first before sending off your hard-earned cash.

Happy Holidays, Weirdo!

Archie McPhee & Co.
Box 30852
Seattle, WA 98103
\$3.00 per catalog

Johnson Smith Co.
4514 19th Court East
Brandon, FL 34203-9794
\$1.00 per catalog

SYNC
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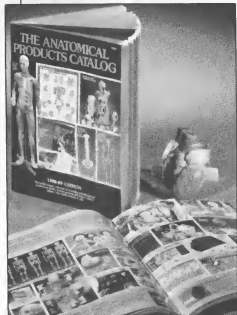
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EXCERPT FROM THE ARCHIE MCPHEE CATALOG

THE ANATOMICAL PRODUCTS CATALOG



HOLIDAY GIFT BOOKS

BY EDWARD BRYANT

Words are the important thing. Illustrations, beauty and quality of construction, impressiveness of presentation, all these things come second. But here is a selection of books in which all elements are fully integrated. Here are books which read well, look good, and which serve equally as volumes to keep for oneself, or as items to give away as splendid presents.

Some science fiction or fantasy art books are indifferently put together and shoddily produced. This is not the case with the exquisite *First Maitz* (Ursus Imprints, 5539 Jackson, Kansas City, MO 64130, \$24.95 + \$2 handling, unpaginated, ISBN 0-942-681-01-0). Don Maitz has become one of science fiction's premier cover artists with more than one hundred fifty book jackets behind him. Now specialty press publishers Arnie Fenner and Jim Loehr have designed, from the ground up, the first showcase collection of Maitz artwork. *First Maitz* collects forty-five color plates along with an equal number of black-and-white pieces. There are also color roughs and studies. Some of Maitz's best-known work is reproduced, along with some new pieces. Gene Wolfe (for whose "Book of the New Sun" series Maitz painted the cover illustrations) contributes an introduction. Some of Maitz's best-known colleagues, including Michael Whelan, Ron Walotzky, James Christiansen, and others, have provided articles. Slightly more affluent buyers will wish to purchase the reasonably priced special edition for a cool \$45, postpaid, which includes a limitation page signed by Maitz and Wolfe, and also features a laid-in signed and previously unpublished Don Maitz print.

Interested in photography? Architecture? Gargoyles? Check out *Nightmares in the Sky: Gargoyles and Grotesques* (Viking, \$24.95, 128 pp., ISBN 0-670-82307-4). Stephen King provides the text, f-stop Fitzgerald the photographs for this lavish assemblage of the grotesque faces that are always watching us from above our lines of sight in urban America. Stephen King needs no introduction; f-stop Fitzgerald's work has

appeared in *Rolling Stone*, *The Village Voice*, and elsewhere. The photography here includes twenty-four full-color studies, one hundred duotones, and an eight-page gatefold. Fitzgerald traced down not your familiar European gargoyles, but the less familiar denizens of such terrifying American landscapes as Milwaukee, New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, and Washington D.C.

Here's a milestone book you should read first, then appreciate for its craft (and heft) of package. It's the new novel by Dan Simmons, *Carrion Comfort* (Dark Harvest, \$23 [tentative price] trade, \$65 limited edition, 960 pp. ISBN unavailable). Years in the planning and writing, this massive contemporary novel of violence, humanity, and mind-manipulation is a tour de force. It is not only probably the best science fiction novel of 1988, it is simultaneously the best horror novel. Not a bad trick. Dark Harvest's first edition is the uncut text, sturdily packaged, and fully illustrated with wraparound jacket, a dozen interior illustrations, and a full-color frontispiece. The publisher assures us that *Carrion Comfort*'s oversized format is designed to "barely fit on the average bookshelf." This is a book I can sincerely recommend you buy two of—one to keep, one to give to a friend.

The holiday wouldn't be properly festive without a dinosaur book. This year the fair-scaled reptile seems to be Douglas Dixon's *The New Dinosaurs* (Salem House, \$19.95, 128 pp., ISBN 0-88162-301-6). Dixon is the paleogeologist who created *After Man*, the heavily illustrated speculative zoology book that forecast the species that might arise on our Earth in the distant future. *The New Dinosaurs* takes a similar tack. Dixon asks (as Carl Sagan and Harry Harrison have before him) what if the Great Meteorite had missed? What if the dinosaurs had survived to the present day? What would they look like? *The New Dinosaurs* is subtitled "an alternate evolution," and that's the author's basis for speculation. Desmond Morris contributes an introduction.

Of today's fantasy novelists, James Blaylock may be the hottest. He certainly is one of the most distinctively strange. His newest novel, *The Last Coin*, is being produced in a lavish limited edition of seven hundred fifty copies by Mark V. Ziesing (P.O. Box 806, Willimantic, CT 06226, \$60, 356 pp., ISBN 0-929480-00-7). This is a fine production of highest quality materials, including the usual slipcase, elaborate endpapers, and a full set of illustrations by Dennis Loughner. All copies will be

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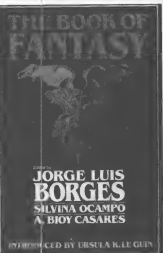
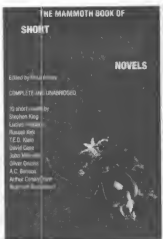
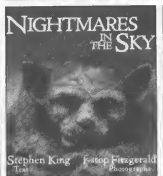
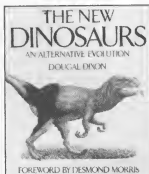
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signed by the author, artist, and the writer of the introduction, Lucius Shepard. *The Last Coin* is a contemporary novel full of head-spinning weirdness unlike anything Blaylock has written before. Imagine Latin American fantasy filtered through a contemporary American sensibility.

Speaking of things Latin American, Viking is finally printing an English language edition of *The Book of Fantasy* edited by Jorge Luis Borges, Silvina Ocampo, and Adolfo Bioy Casares (\$19.95, 384 pp., ISBN 0-670-82393-7). The idea for compiling this eclectic anthology of fantasy was generated one evening in 1937. The premise was to assemble what the editors felt to be the very best from fantastic literature. The contributors include Ryunosuke Agutagawa, G.K. Chesterton, James Joyce, Franz Kafka, Lord Dunsany, Tsao Hsueh-Chin, Leon Bloy, H.A. Murena, and a lot of others you don't usually find in the chain-store fantasy section. This edition is introduced by Ursula K. LeGuin.

A genuine landmark of dark fantasy has finally been assembled and published in a single volume. The English fantasist Mervyn Peake's *Titus Groan*,

Titus Alone, and *Gormenghast* have now been handily bound together as (not too oddly) *The Gormenghast Trilogy* (Overlook, \$24.95, 1032 pp., SBN 974-6) The book includes Peake's own drawings as illustrations. Anthony Burgess has written a new introduction. This tale of a young boy growing up in an immense old castle even larger and more sinister than the Overlook Hotel is not to be missed. And if you've already read it, here's a chance to get a splendid permanent copy.

Anthologies make both great foundation stones for one's own library, and much-appreciated gifts for others. Here are three of the first rank from St. Martin's Press: *The Year's Best Fantasy* edited by Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling (\$19.95, 512 pp., ISBN 0-312-01851-7), *The Year's Best Science Fiction* edited by Gardner Dozois (\$19.95, 694 pp., ISBN 0-312-01853-3), and *The Best Horror Stories from the Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction* edited by Edward Ferman and Anne Jordan (\$22.95, 432 pp., ISBN 0-312-01894-0). All three titles describe the contents perfectly.

Curious about the darker side of

fantasy and the folks who write it? Take a look at *Horror: The 100 Best Books* edited by Stephen Jones and David Pringle (Carroll & Graf, \$15.95, 224 pp., ISBN 0-88184-417-9). The plot isn't much, but the cast of characters is incredible! This book contains one hundred essays by one hundred of today's finest writers of the fantastic, all picking out and discussing one of the one hundred seminal horror books. You can read Brian Aldiss on *Dracula*, Lisa Tuttle on *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, Russell Hoban tackling Lovecraft's *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*. Other contributors include Clive Barker, Gene Wolfe, Whitley Strieber, Robert Bloch, and ninety-three more.

Something that will have to occupy everyone's stoutest reference shelf is James Gunn's *The New Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* (Viking, \$24.95, 544 pp., ISBN 0-670-81041-X). Contributors make up another "Who's Who" of the field, including such luminaries as Greg Bear, Brian Aldiss, Arthur C. Clarke, Philip José Farmer, Poul Anderson, and Frederik Pohl. This information is, of course, impeccably comprehensive, but this is also the perfect browsing book. ■

TV TELEPLAY



**THE ORIGINAL TELEPLAY
FIRST BROADCAST ON
DECEMBER 2, 1960**

**COPYRIGHT © 1960
BY ROD SERLING**

Producer Buck Houghton
Director Jack Smight

CAST

Jana Inger Stevens
Dr. Loren John Hoyt
Mrs. Loren Irene Tedrow
Nelda Mary Gregory
Robert the Butler Tom Palmer
Gretchen Doris Karnes
Suzanne Valley Keane
Jensen Jason Johnson

ACT ONE

**1. SHOT (ART) OF AN ODD-
LOOKING SKY**

With strange clouds that drift across the sky. PAN DOWN for LONG ANGLE SHOT of a road that stretches out across a barren landscape punctuated by odd rock croppings and an occasional gnarled-branch tree. The CAMERA STARTS MOVING DOWN this road at a fast clip heading toward a far-out horizon. Over this we hear a Narrator's Voice.

THE LATENESS OF THE HOUR

BY ROD SERLING

THE LATENESS OF THE HOUR

SERLING'S VOICE

This highway leads to the shadowy tip of reality, a through-route to the land of the different, the bizarre, the unexplainable.

(a pause)

You go as far as you like on this road. Its limits are only those of the mind itself. Ladies and gentlemen, you're entering the wondrous dimension of imagination. Next stop—

At this moment we've reached the end of the road and are just a moment away from what appears to be a precipice leading out into nothingness. Concurrent with the next line of narration, the lettering springs up in front of the camera almost as if on a hinge.

SERLING'S VOICE

The Twilight Zone!

The CAMERA MOVES through into the lettering, smashing it into bits and then continuing on through until we are suspended in night sky. A SLOW PAN DOWN to opening shot of the play.

2. INTERIOR LIBRARY LOREN HOUSE NIGHT

This is a massive room designed for comfort that walks hand in hand with tradition, taste, and breeding. A giant stone fireplace is flanked on either side by floor-to-ceiling bookcases. The furniture is old, but leather-upholstered and all extremely comfortable.

3. PAN SHOT ACROSS THE ROOM

Taking in first a shot of Mrs. Loren, a woman in her fifties, who somehow has aged beyond that point. She looks like an invalid, but upon closer examination we see that this is a constitutional weakness, not related to illness. She sits in her chair, hands in her lap, while a maid, Nelda, massages the back of her neck, occasionally dabbing on liniment in an expert and obviously oft-repeated ritual. The CAMERA PANS FURTHER OVER past the fireplace to Dr. Loren who stands close to one of the bookcases, but is preoccupied with staring across the room toward the window where Jana stands thumbing through a scrapbook, occasionally looking across the room toward her mother.

4. CLOSE PROFILE SHOT JANA

She's in her early twenties, lovely and yet obviously disquieted. She puts the scrapbook down, stares briefly out the window where the rain cascades down through the night, then looks down toward the scrapbook.

5. CLOSE SHOT MRS. LOREN

Whose head goes up. She briefly opens her eyes, reacting to the massage and in a heavy, comfortable voice—

MRS. LOREN

Something, dear? You looking at the album again?

6. REVERSE ANGLE LOOKING TOWARD JANA

(she holds up the scrapbook)

JANA

When was this picture taken?

7. TRACK SHOT WITH HER

As she carries the scrapbook across the room over to her mother. In the process she passes Dr. Loren who looks up at

her briefly and quizzically, then back down to his book.

8. TWO SHOT MRS. LOREN AND JANA

The former suffers herself to rise slightly in the chair to look at the scrapbook.

MRS. LOREN

Oh that's a lovely picture of you, Nelda. Let's see... that was taken the summer after Dr. Loren retired from the lab. And you're holding those lovely yellow roses that Jensen planted for us.

9. CLOSE SHOT JANA

As she looks up very slowly toward Nelda the maid. She smiles, but there's something lying deep behind the smile.

JANA

It must be wonderful not to age, Nelda.

(a pause)

Isn't it?

10. CLOSE SHOT NELDA

(the face is almost expressionless)

NELDA

It has its advantages, I guess, Miss Jana.

11. DIFFERENT ANGLE JANA

As she picks up the scrapbook and starts to carry it over to the bookcase.

12. CLOSE SHOT DR. LOREN

(who looks up from his book)

LOREN

Nelda will put that away for you, Jana.

13. CLOSE SHOT JANA

JANA

That's all right, Father. I'd like to put it away myself.

14. DIFFERENT ANGLE THE ROOM

As Jana puts the scrapbook back, then walks over to the fireplace, holds her hands over the flames for a moment and stares pensively into them.

15. MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT MRS. LOREN

(looking up from her massage)

MRS. LOREN

You're not chilly are you, Jana dear? You shouldn't be. It's seventy-two degrees in here.

(then to her husband)

Isn't it, William? Isn't it seventy-two degrees?

16. GROUP SHOT

LOREN

(nods)

The optimum temperature.

JANA

(with a tired smile)

Of course, the optimum temperature. And the chairs are designed for maximum comfort. The fire for perfect heat radiation.

(she looks around the room)



And the windows for the *most* efficient light and ventilation.

(then looking up)

And the ceilings for the most desirable acoustical qualities.

(then looking toward her father)

Everything built to perfection, Father. Everything designed for—

17. CLOSE SHOT JANA

As she stops abruptly. Her gaze has fallen on Nelda, the maid.

18. CLOSE SHOT NELDA

Seeing the look, her eyes go down.

19. CLOSE SHOT NELDA'S HANDS

As they rest on Mrs. Loren's shoulders in a sudden cessation of movement.

20. CLOSE SHOT MRS. LOREN

As she looks up nervously to stare across at her husband.

21. CLOSE SHOT LOREN

As he looks away.

22. DIFFERENT ANGLE ALL OF THEM

As Mrs. Loren forces a smile.

MRS. LOREN

Please continue, Nelda.

Then she settles back, half-closes her eyes like a contented cat, as the maid once again continues to massage.

23. CLOSE SHOT JANA

As she stands motionlessly and the sounds begin to register. First the rain on the window, then the crackling fire in the fireplace. The clock ticking on the mantelpiece. All of the sounds seem disproportionately loud, but are intruded upon by the sound of her mother's little sensual groan of pleasure that comes from across the room.

24. CLOSE SHOT MRS. LOREN

The maid moves her hands down to massage the shoulders with expert kneading. And again the mother makes another sensual sound of delight and pleasure.

25. CLOSE SHOT JANA

As she abruptly turns her head away, unable to take this. She moves over to the fireplace, her back to them.

26. DIFFERENT ANGLE JANA

JANA

Haven't you had enough of that, Mother?

27. CLOSE SHOT MRS. LOREN

As she looks up, surprised.

MRS. LOREN

Why, Jana dear, you know that helps my appetite.

(looking at her watch)

My, it's almost six....

28. CLOSE SHOT JANA

JANA

Then why don't we eat a little bit earlier tonight....or a little bit later.

(she looks toward her father)

Or why don't we go out and eat in a restaurant?

29. CLOSE SHOT MRS. LOREN

As she looks up aghast.

30. CLOSE SHOT LOREN

(he frowns)

LOREN

A restaurant, Jana? Now why in the world would we go out and eat in a restaurant?

31. TWO SHOT LOREN AND JANA

JANA

I don't know. It's just that...well, it would be different.

LOREN

I've no doubt it would be different. We'd walk through the rain and get sopping wet. Then we'd eat some kind of greasy, unpalatable mess on dirty, half-washed plates. It would then be a moot question as to whether we would succumb to pneumonia or pneumonia.

32. MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT

NELDA AND MRS. LOREN

As the maid finishes, wipes her hands on a towel, caps the bottle, then smiles down at the woman.

NELDA

Will that be all, Mrs. Loren?

MRS. LOREN

(with a weak, sick smile)

Just a few minutes longer, Nelda—

33. CLOSE SHOT JANA

As something starts to burst at the seams.

JANA

Mom, don't make her do it any more!

Her tone is so sharp, so cutting, so biting that her mother

THE LATENESS OF THE HOUR

first looks amazed and then just shakes her head unable to speak.

JANA

As she gradually loses control.

It's just that... it's just that outside there's the beautiful, clean sound of rain...

(then looking toward the mother)

and in here just an occasional animal grunt of pleasure—

34. CLOSE SHOT LOREN

(horrified as he rises)

LOREN

Jana!

35. TWO SHOT LOREN AND JANA

JANA

Please yell at me! I'm frightened to hear you yell at me! It proves to me that you've got lungs left. Lungs and a mind and a mouth and a voice.

You know we're atrophying in here, Father, don't you? We sit here day after day and year after year while the clock ticks and we decay with every minute that goes by while Nelda, the maid, and Robert, the butler, and Gretchen, the cook, and Suzanne, the upstairs maid, and Jensen, the handyman—

LOREN

(taking a step toward her, his voice raised)

Jana, I will listen to no more of this!

JANA

(outshouting him)

While this army of domestics does everything but our breathing for us!

LOREN

(his face white)

Would you leave us, Nelda?

36. CLOSE SHOT NELDA

(she nods in assent)

NELDA

(softly)

Yes, sir.

She starts collecting the massage material and then moves across the room toward the double doors.

37. CLOSE SHOT JANA

(as she shouts)

JANA

Nelda!

CUT TO:

38. EXTERIOR HALLWAY

As the double doors open and Nelda walks out directly into the camera. Over her shoulder we see Jana appear at the open doors.

JANA

I'm speaking to you, Nelda.

39. EXTREMELY TIGHT CLOSE SHOT NELDA

NELDA

(without turning around)

Yes, Miss Jana?

40. CLOSE SHOT JANA
JANA

Just this—

Then she stops abruptly, aware of other presences.

41. FULL SHOT THE HALLWAY

Down the stairs halfway comes Suzanne, the maid. From the adjoining dining room across the hall comes Robert, the butler. And from the corridor behind the stairway appear Gretchen, the cook and Jensen, the handyman.

42. PAN SHOT AROUND THE FACES

Each shares in common a stoic, unemotional look.

43. CLOSE SHOT NELDA
NELDA

You were saying, Miss Jana?

44. FULL SHOT THE ROOM

With all parties present and in view.

JANA

I was about to say... I was about to make mention of the fact that—

(she stops abruptly)

45. LONG SHOT OVER HER SHOULDER

Her father has now come out into the hall.

LOREN

(firmly and quietly)

Please don't stop, Jana, on my account. We have no secrets here.

46. DIFFERENT ANGLE JANA

As she whirls around to stare at her father.

JANA

Don't we? No secrets, Father, is that it?

Her features work as she tries to stifle the surging thing that is deep inside and screams to said.

That's all we do have is a secret. That's how we live—by shutting off the world, turning our backs on it. By saying that in here is day and out there is night.

Then turning around to face the servants and point at them.

While these... these soundless, fleshless, things glide around here and with their highly efficient ministrations turn my mother and father into jelly!

47. PAN SHOT AROUND THE FACES OF THE SERVANTS

Who stare at her stoically. Jana whirls around and starts up the steps.

48. ANGLE SHOT LOOKING UP TOWARD SUZANNE

The upstairs maid who stands halfway up on the stairs and then moves aside slightly as Jana gets abreast of her.

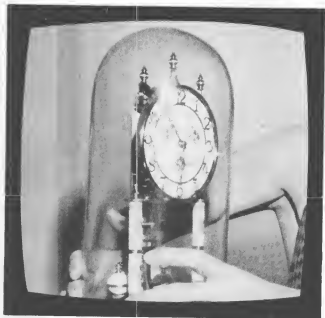
SUZANNE

(with just the suggestion of a smile)

You'll forgive me, Miss Jana... but you sound jealous!

49. CLOSE SHOT JANA

As her face goes white and she succumbs to an unspeakable fury. She suddenly grabs the maid, wrestles with her for a moment, then suddenly flings her down to tumble in a bone-



jarring descent down the steps.

50. **ANGLE SHOT LOOKING DOWN AT SUZANNE**
As she lies there motionlessly for a moment, then slowly rises, dusts herself off. She's absolutely unscathed and completely unshaken. She just looks up smiling toward Jana who rams a fist into her mouth, her eyes agape with fear.

51. **PAN SHOT AROUND THE FACES OF THE OTHER "PEOPLE"**

They survey the scene again stoically and with no emotion whatsoever. The pan winds up on a **SHOT OF LOREN** who looks up toward his daughter.

LOREN

You said yourself, Jana, that I built and designed to perfection. And I made these people quite indestructible!

JANA

But it's like living with ghosts!

LOREN

(shakes his head slowly from side to side)

Not ghosts, my dear. Ghosts die after having lived. But with our people... they had no life... until I gave it to them!

52. **ANGLE SHOT LOOKING DOWN FROM TOP OF STEPS AGAIN**

And taking in all the "people" who suddenly **FREEZE FRAME**.

SERLING'S VOICE

The residence of Dr. William Loren... which is in reality a menagerie for machines....

The **CAMERA PANS DOWN** until we see Serling sitting on the steps.

SERLING

We are about to discover that sometimes the product of a man's talent and genius can walk among us untouched by the normal ravages of time. These are Dr. Loren's robots. Built to functional as well as artis-

tic perfection. But in a moment, Dr. William Loren, wife...and daughter...will discover that perfection is relative. That even robots have to be paid for. And very shortly, we will be shown exactly what is the bill!

FADE TO BLACK

**OPENING BILLBOARD
FIRST COMMERCIAL**

FADE ON:

53. **INTERIOR LIBRARY NIGHT**

PAN SHOT ACROSS THE ROOM past the front window where the remnants of a dying rain continue to trickle down the pane, over to the fireplace which is now dying, past Mrs. Loren who naps in her chair and then to Loren who sits in front of the fireplace. Robert, the butler, enters carrying a hand-carved pipe holder, loaded with a dozen pipes. He stops and bends over in front of Loren, proffering the pipe rack. Loren looks them over briefly.

LOREN

I believe I'll take the Meerschaum tonight, Robert.

54. **TWO SHOT THE TWO MEN**
ROBERT

I'll prepare it, sir.

The butler removes one of the pipes, goes over to a humidior, fills the pipe from it, packing it very carefully, tightening the stem, then carries it over to Loren. The butler then lights it for him, then kneels down and removes Loren's shoes, replaces them with comfortable slippers. He then rises.

ROBERT

Will there be anything else, Dr. Loren?

LOREN

I think not, Robert.

55. **MEDIUM LONG SHOT ACROSS THE ROOM OF JANA**

As she enters, exchanges a look with Robert who goes past her and out of the room.

56. **MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT LOREN**

He looks up at Jana intently and appraisingly.

LOREN

Well, Jana? Shall we talk of it now?

57. **TWO SHOT**

JANA

Shall we talk of what, Father?

LOREN

(holds out his hands in a gesture)

I think that's obvious. Suddenly...and inexplicably, your mother and I find out that you're discontented, you're rebellious. You think this pleases us, Jana?

58. **CLOSE SHOT LOREN**

He looks down at his pipe. It's gone out. He half turns in his chair and reaches for the bell cord.

59. **CLOSE SHOT JANA**

As she hurriedly moves over to him and grabs his arm.

THE LATENESS OF THE HOUR

JANA

I'll light your pipe, Father. There's no need to call Robert.

60. CLOSE SHOT JANA AND LOREN

As she takes matches off the table and holds the match out to him. Her hands shake perceptibly.

61. REVERSE ANGLE LOOKING TOWARD LOREN

His face illuminated in the match fire. He touches her wrist and blows out the fire, then pulls the girl toward him.

LOREN

(intensely)

I explained to you long ago why I did what I did. Why I retired from the world. Why I built robots—

62. DIFFERENT ANGLE THE TWO OF THEM

As Jana shakes off his hand.

JANA

You gave me an excuse, Father—you never gave me a reason. You never admitted that you were a man so terrified by the world outside that he betook himself to bed and built robots so that he'd never have to crawl out from under the covers.

(she leans forward close to him)

What you've done to yourselves is an atrocity. But what you've done to me is even worse. You've turned me into a freak. An unsocial, insulated, unworldly freak.

63. DIFFERENT ANGLE LOREN

He leans forward in his chair.

LOREN

Shall I tell you what else I've done, Jana? (a pause)

I've kept you from harm. I've protected you from disease. And insulation in the twentieth century is no crime—it's a ser-

vice! You've never had to look eye to eye into the face of war. The face of poverty. The face of prejudice. You've been insulated, yes—but what you think of as imprisonment—it happens to be asylum and security—it happens to be asylum and security and survival!

64. CLOSE SHOT JANA

She shakes her head again, rejecting.

JANA

Asylum—in a hot house. Security—in a mausoleum... a burial ground. And survival? Like a vegetable, Father. Like a vegetable survives.

Then turning so that she includes her mother.

What you're becoming. What you're making me become. A vegetable.

65. TRACK SHOT JANA

As she moves hurriedly over to her father and kneels down in front of him.

JANA

Father... the scales are turning. Instead of controlling, you're being controlled. You're becoming dependent. You're reaching a point where you won't be able to exist without them!

66. ANGLE SHOT LOOKING OVER LOREN'S SHOULDER

Toward Jana's upturned face.

JANA

Father... you've got to get rid of them. Destroy them or throw them out or dismantle them—

67. REVERSE ANGLE LOOKING TOWARD LOREN

As he rises.

LOREN

Dismantle them? Jana, they're not just machines. Do you know how many thousands of hours I spent developing them? Perfecting them? Do you realize how intricate they are? How scientifically precise? Not just arms and legs that move, Jana. Not just automatons. They're *creatures*. They have minds and wills. They have memory tracks, understand? I have supplied each one with a memory of their own. Each one can recount to you in detail everything that's occurred to them from early childhood and they *had* no childhood. They were born just as you see them, looking the way they do, acting the way they do, with the talents that each one of them has. One was *built* as a cook. The other was *built* as a maid. The butler was manufactured as a butler. The handyman knows nothing but *being* a handyman. Jana—

He reaches forward and grabs her shoulders, his voice intense.

You're not asking me to dismantle machines. You're asking me to murder that which has life.



68. MEDIUM LONG SHOT MRS. LOREN

As she holds out a hand to Jana.

MRS. LOREN

Jana, my dear...listen to your mother.
You're acting like a fool—

69. DIFFERENT ANGLE JANA

As she whirls around to face her mother.

JANA

I'm acting like a woman, Mother, who has just a fragment of will left. I'm acting like a woman who wants something more out of life than to be massaged five times a day....

(then turning to her father)

Or a man who thinks that paradise is a paneled library where he can sit his life away getting his pipes filled and re-filled and his slippers put on and off.

(then with intensity)

Father—they have to get out of here. There isn't any time left. I mean now...I mean all of them! Nelda, Gretchen, Suzanne...all of them!

70. CLOSE SHOT LOREN

LOREN

That's quite impossible!

71. CLOSE SHOT JANA

Her lips quiver.

JANA

I'll give you a choice. Get rid of the machines...or I'll leave.

72-74. SERIES OF CLOSE SHOTS

First of Mrs. Loren, then Loren himself, and finally back to Jana.

JANA

I'm waiting.

MRS. LOREN

(almost in shock)

You can't leave, Jana. You simply can't leave. What would you do out there? What would happen to you? Who'd look after you?

JANA

Out there?

(she points to the window)

You mean outside in the world? You mean outside with the normal people who live and work and then die, but do it properly as God made them to live and die? Yes, Mother, yes, that's where I want to go.
Out there.

75. TRACK SHOT JANA

As she rises and starts to rush out of the room.

76. CLOSE SHOT DOUBLE DOORS

As she pushes them open to reveal Robert standing there, facing her, icy-eyed, and behind him, Nelda.

77. MOVING SHOT JANA

As she steels herself and starts to walk past them toward the stairs.



ROBERT

As she passes.

Miss Jana, you'll forgive me, but...that was most intemperate of you—

NELDA

As she in turn is passed.

Miss Jana, think of your mother and father—

78. ANGLE SHOT LOOKING UP THE STAIRWAY

As Jana starts to walk up the stairs. Suzanne appears at the top and starts down, meeting Jana about three quarters of the way up.

SUZANNE

Miss Jana...it was really very unwise of you—

79. REVERSE ANGLE LOOKING DOWN TOWARD JANA

As seen from behind, Suzanne standing above her. Her face goes white, her mouth taut.

JANA

Stop that!

Then turning so that she's staring down the stairs toward the rest of the servants who now congregate in the hall, she shouts:

All of you—you're all to shut up! Why you're jokes—that's what you are. You're hysterical jokes. With your hurt looks and your sad little homilies and your mouthed little clichés—you're like walking record players—that's all any of you are.

She looks down at her father who has come out of the library door. He looks up at her.

LOREN

Jana! You're making it very difficult for me to be patient. Very difficult.

80. DIFFERENT ANGLE JANA

(she shakes her head)

THE LATENESS OF THE HOUR

JANA
(softly)

Then I apologize, Father. You're so accustomed to perfection... I hate to throw a stone in that serene pool of yours! But you forgot something. Did you know that? You forgot something. *They* may be indestructible....

(she points toward the servants)

But you, Father... you'd better be careful of them, because it so happens that you're not indestructible!

81. CLOSE SHOT LOREN

As he reacts and then, almost as if against his will, he moves his eyes down to look at the robots who stand in the hall.

82. ANGLE SHOT LOOKING OVER HIS SHOULDER

At the robots who stare at him emotionlessly.

FADE TO BLACK:

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE ON:

83. INTERIOR JANA'S BEDROOM NIGHT

She stands at the mirror brushing her hair, dressed in street clothes. Behind her we see the suitcase on the bed, open and packed.

84. PAN SHOT PAST THIS REFLECTION

Over to the door where Loren appears, takes a deep breath, and then takes a half step into the room. Jana freezes, looks at his reflection in the mirror, then turns to him.

JANA

When I get where I'm going... I'll write to you.

85. CLOSE SHOT LOREN

He looks tired and yet at this moment more intense than we've ever seen him.

LOREN

Jana, what is it you want from us?

86. REVERSE ANGLE LOOKING TOWARD JANA

I thought I made that quite plain. I want you to open the windows, Father, and let the air in. *And let the world in!*

LOREN

By destroying practically a life's work.

JANA

Before they destroy you!

87. DIFFERENT ANGLE LOREN

He takes another step into the room. His voice now sounds pleading and soft.

LOREN

Jana... we've... we've loved you very much. If you could only... if you could only realize that this has been as much for you... as for us!

88. DIFFERENT ANGLE LOREN'S FACE

As he looks at her with total love.

LOREN
(very softly)

We have loved you, Jana... beyond any words.

89. CLOSE SHOT JANA

As she reacts, looks away for a moment, then walks over to him and puts her cheek against his.

JANA

I know that. God help me, I know that—

LOREN

(gripping her arm)

Jana... *please stay*. Please, Jana.

90. TWO SHOT JANA AND LOREN

As they stare at one another. Finally Loren pulls his eyes away.

LOREN
(very softly)

I'll do what you ask. I promise you.

He turns and goes out of the room.

91. ANGLE SHOT LOOKING DOWN THE STAIRWAY

As he walks down. Robert, the butler, and Nelda, the maid, are at the foot of the steps and watch him come down. He stops half way.

LOREN

Robert?

ROBERT

Sir?

92. ANGLE SHOT LOOKING UP TOWARD LOREN

As he reaches into his pocket and takes out a key. This he throws to Robert who catches it deftly.

LOREN

I want you to take all the servants down to the basement and unlock the door to my workroom. Just stay there till I come down.

93. CLOSE SHOT ROBERT

As he fingers the key, staring at it, then looks up at Loren. At this moment Suzanne, Jensen, and Gretchen, the cook, appear in the hallway and stand there motionlessly looking up at Loren.

ROBERT

Have our services been unsatisfactory, sir?

94. CLOSE SHOT LOREN

LOREN

Robert, I've given you an order. You're to unlock the door to my workroom and all of you are to stay there and wait for me. Unfortunately... I shall have to... I shall have to—

He can't say it, puts his head down.

95. CLOSE SHOT ROBERT

ROBERT

I've been an excellent butler, sir. I really

have. I think you'll agree with me—

He continues to speak and his words are overlapped by

Nelda.

NELDA

Mr. Loren, I came very well recommended,



sir, and I don't think there's a more efficient maid anywhere in the whole country than —

She continues to speak and her words are overlapped by each of the others who begin protesting their efficiency, their loyalty, their competence.

96. PAN SHOT AROUND THE FACES

As they babble, their voices raised in a growing din until finally Loren shouts.

97. CLOSE SHOT LOREN
LOREN

No more!

98. PAN SHOT AGAIN AROUND THE FACES OF THE ROBOTS

As they cease their talk and then very slowly follow Robert as he moves down the hall and off camera. SLOW PAN UP THE STAIRS to the very top where Jana stands. Gradually her face relaxes and she begins to smile and the smile is one of triumph, relief, and thanksgiving.

DISSOLVE TO:

99. INTERIOR HALL CLOSE SHOT
GRANDFATHER CLOCK BY DOOR

As the pendulum swings back and forth, clicking off the hours. PAN SHOT DOWN TO THE FLOOR where we see a shadow appear then PAN UP FOR A SHOT OF LOREN. He has a white surgeon's coat on which he very tiredly takes off, closes his eyes, presses his fingers against them, then looks up toward the top of the stairs.

100. ANGLE SHOT LOOKING UP TOWARD JANA
As she slowly walks down the steps, stopping halfway.
LOREN

It's done, Jana. We're alone in the house now.

101. OPEN LIBRARY DOORS

Mrs. Loren stands there.

MRS. LOREN
Alone, William?

102. ANGLE SHOT
LOOKING DOWN TOWARD HALL
LOREN

Quite alone, my dear. Quite alone. You and I...

(and then looking up toward the steps)
and our daughter.

103. CLOSE SHOT MRS. LOREN
(her eyes go down)
MRS. LOREN

I've become so...so accustomed to them. It'll be...it'll be a little hard at first, won't it, William?

104. CLOSE SHOT LOREN
LOREN

Perhaps, my dear, a little hard...in the beginning.

105. ANGLE SHOT LOOKING UP TOWARD JANA
JANA

Mother—we'll lead normal lives from now on, do you understand? *Normal lives.* We'll have parties and we'll take trips. We'll invite people over. We'll make new friends. (then laughing with massive relief as she grabs her mother and hugs her)

I'll even find a young man. I'll find a young man and before you know it you'll have grandchildren and—

106. EXTREMELY TIGHT CLOSE SHOT
MRS. LOREN'S FACE

As seen over Jana's shoulder. It suddenly freezes. Jana, sensing something, releases her mother and looks deep into her face.

107. CLOSE SHOT JANA
(her voice is almost a whisper)
JANA

What's the matter? What is it?

MRS. LOREN

(her voice shaking)

It's what you said about grandchildren—

CUT TO:

108. DR. LOREN

Hurriedly overlapping her, his own voice shaking in a desperate attempt to give it levity and failing totally.

LOREN

What your mother means, Jana...what she means...well, after all...isn't it pretty normal and natural that parents always think of their children as children and suddenly they grow up and they talk of having children of their own...well, this is a little difficult for parents to digest all in one lump like that....

He stops. He's unable to go on. He looks down toward the floor.

109. CLOSE SHOT JANA

As she stares at him. She takes a step toward him.

THE LATENESS OF THE HOUR

JANA

Something's not right, is it? There's something between us... something in this house that...

(she whirls around toward her mother)

What is it?

110. CLOSER SHOT JANA

As her eyes move past her mother toward the open doors leading into the library.

111. LONG SHOT THROUGH THE DOORS

Taking in the bookcase and the photo album which is the focal point of the shelf.

112. DIFFERENT ANGLE JANA

As she rushes into the library, past her mother who tries to stop her, but is flung aside.

113. CLOSE SHOT JANA

At the bookcase as she grabs the photo album, almost tears it open, rifles through the pages, then slowly the book slips out of her hands and falls to the floor as she slowly raises her head to stare toward the door.

114. LONG SHOT ACROSS THE ROOM OF DR. LOREN AND HIS WIFE

Who stand there motionlessly.

115. REVERSE ANGLE LOOKING TOWARD JANA JANA

Why isn't my picture in any of the photo albums?

(she shakes her head)

There are no pictures of me at all.

116. CLOSE SHOT MRS. LOREN

Her lips tremble.

MRS. LOREN

Why, Jana, dear... Jana, dear... there are loads of pictures of you. Remember in the garden last summer? Remember the Easter picture? And then there were the pictures of you last Christmas decorating the tree—

117. REVERSE ANGLE LOOKING TOWARD JANA JANA

But not as a little girl. No pictures of me as a little girl. None at all. You and Father and the robots. Always pictures of the robots. Ten years ago, twenty years ago...

(she shakes her head)

But no pictures of me!

She takes a step across the room toward them.

Why?

(then, almost sobbing)

I want you to tell me why!

118. CLOSE ANGLE LOREN

As he stares at her in anguished silence.

119. CLOSE SHOT JANA

As her eyes narrow and a sudden horrifying understanding begins to creep into her consciousness. Her lips tremble.

JANA

It's not true. It couldn't be true.

Then in a run across the room close to them, she throws herself down to her father's feet, looks up at him, crying.

It isn't true. I want you to tell me it isn't true.

120. DIFFERENT ANGLE LOREN

As he grabs her, clutching tightly at her face as he turns it up to him.

LOREN

You're our daughter. You know you're our daughter. And you remember everything that happened to you since you were a child. You remember the schools you went to. The children you played with. You remember all the places you've been.

And then his voice agonized as he grips her even more fiercely and tightly.

Jana, you remember all these things.

You've got to remember them.

121. ANGLE SHOT LOOKING TOWARD LOREN'S FACE AND MRS. LOREN JANA'S P.O.V.

122. REVERSE ANGLE LOOKING DOWN AT HER AS she looks from face to face.

JANA

Why should I remember them? Because you fed them to me, didn't you? You fed them to me. A memory track. A memory track that you inserted into my... my mind?

She looks up and touches her head and slowly runs her fingers across her face, very softly.

What am I? Please tell me... what am I?

123. DIFFERENT ANGLE LOREN

As he kneels down, his face close to hers.

LOREN

It doesn't make any difference. Jana, it doesn't make any difference. We were childless. We had nothing of our flesh to leave behind. Nothing of our hearts, Jana. Nothing of our love. And so... and so... we got you—

124. EXTREMELY TIGHT CLOSE SHOT JANA JANA

You mean... you made me. You built me.

You manufactured me.

She shakes her head back and forth.

I'm a robot, aren't I?

125. LONG ANGLE SHOT LOOKING DOWN AT HER

As she suddenly puts her hands to her head, looks up toward the ceiling and screams.

JANA

I'm a robot!

She throws herself against the wall, sobbing.

I'm a robot!

126-128. DIFFERENT ANGLES AS SHE RUNS UP THE STEPS

JANA

(shouting)

I'm a robot! I'm a robot!

129. ANGLE SHOT

LOOKING UP TOWARD HER AT TOP OF STEPS

As Loren starts to race toward her, stopping at the foot of the steps and shouting up at her.

LOREN

Jana...you're our daughter! I built you as a daughter. I built you as a thing of love! (he shakes his head)

It doesn't make any difference what you are or how you came here! You're our daughter! Jana, you have to understand that! You're our daughter!

130. SLOW PAN UP TO JANA

As she looks down at them. She shakes her head.

JANA

Well, I can't be. I don't have the...the capacity to love in return.

(she shakes her head again)

I can't be a daughter. I'm a *thing*. I'm a *machine*.

She very slowly sticks her hands out in front of her to stare at them clinically as if they were some kind of foreign extensions that had just grown from her. Then she slowly raises one hand, then brings it down as a fist on top of the bannister, smashing at it over and over again while both father and mother scream from below.

No pain!

She brings her hand down again.

No pain at all.

Again she smashes it against the bannister.

I can't even feel pain. No emotions at all.

No pain, no anger, no fury....

And then she slowly sinks to her knees.

No love. I can't even feel love....

Her head goes down. She leans against the wall sobbing.



window, past the bookcases, then over to the fireplace then finally to the mantel where the clock ticks the hours away. And added to the sound of rain, fire, the clock, is a little groan of pleasure that we've already heard before from Mrs. Loren. PAN SHOT OVER TO LOREN who sits quietly in his chair studying the fire. THEN A VERY SLOW PAN over to Mrs. Loren who sits in her chair. At the top of the frame we see hands expertly massaging her shoulders. Mrs. Loren smiles though half-closed eyes.

MRS. LOREN

A little to the left, dear, and not quite so hard.

JANA'S VOICE

Of course, Mrs. Loren.

SLOW PAN SHOT UP to Jana in a maid's uniform, just as Nelda wore, with the same dull, stoic, lifeless expression. She very expertly massages Mrs. Loren's shoulders, pausing only for a moment to get some liniment, puts some in her palm, then she continues the massage again. She is now a machine and what she is doing is a life function. It's what she has been built for. SLOW DOLLY AWAY from her then over to the fire, across the room over to the window.

SERLING'S VOICE

Let this be the postscript. Should you be worn out by the rigors of competing in a very competitive world; if you're distraught from having to share your existence with the noises and the neuroses of the twentieth century; if you crave serenity, but want it full time and with no strings attached—get yourself a workroom in the basement.

(a pause)

Then drop a note to Dr. and Mrs. William Loren. They're a childless couple who made serenity a life's work. And maybe there're a few "Do-It-Yourself" pamphlets still available...in *The Twilight Zone*.

DISSOLVE TO:

133. INTERIOR LIBRARY NIGHT

Again the rain pours down outside. PAN SHOT past the

134. PAN SHOT UP INTO THE SKY

THE END

FADE TO BLACK

SUMMIT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 35

saw that of the half-dozen or so papers that he thought he really wanted to hear, three were in different tracks at the same time.

He also made the pleasing discovery that housing had been allotted alphabetically, by subject matter; and as "SETI" came right after "Cetaceans" his room was just a few doors away from that of Ulla Halvarson, the blonde radio astronomer from Stockholm. Under the right circumstances, he thought, that could be a great convenience. At least, it was a pleasing thing to think about, and Sackett, still unhealed after a bitter and unexpected divorce, needed something like that. The other thing he saw, in the housing directory, was that right next door to him in the "Cetaceans" group was a Lieutenant Commander Richard F. Bisket, USN. Although Sackett had never heard the man's name, he was quite sure Bisket had to be the killer whale's proprietor.

Sackett didn't really have any objections to the Navy—not as long as the Navy was perfectly willing to go on funding his work. Whether they believed in it or not; the important thing, he was pretty sure, was that it was a cover in their own more immediately practical work of training the little animals to swim down to underwater mines and nuzzle them. . . and thus blow the mines, and themselves, to atoms. He thought he probably should introduce himself to his more-or-less colleague, and so when he was ready to go up the hill to the first session he knocked at Bisket's door.

Bisket answered, looking sleepy; he had obviously missed breakfast, and he was still in a robe. "Hey, Sackett," he said amiably when they had exchanged names. "Nice to know you. And, say, you guys really know how to live. You sure they didn't pick this place just so they could get in a little free skiing?"

"Of course not," Sackett said stiffly. He looked in the program. "I don't see you listed for a paper," he said.

The commander looked wise. "How can I?" he said. "You know, everything we do in our shop's classified. What's to give a paper on?"

"Oh," said Sackett, nodding. "I see. You're just here to listen to the others, see if there's anything new you can use in your own program." But that, he thought darkly, hardly paid for billing the taxpayers the cost of flying an orca from San Diego to Switzerland. But that was wrong, too, because the commander was shaking his head.

"What's to hear?" he asked cheerfully. "Every time I listen to one of

these papers it's either something we did five years ago, but couldn't report on because it was classified, or something we already tried and found out it didn't work. No. I'm here just to keep our exhibits company. So you give a nice paper, Sackett, and be sure you tell everybody to go down and look at our fish tomorrow morning. I'll be back around dinner time."

"Where are you going?"

"I thought I'd get in a little skiing," the commander said.

SINCE THERE WAS NO SURE WAY OF telling which papers, if any, were really going to be worth hearing, Sackett spent the first session sampling. By the time of the coffee break he had heard some part of a dozen different papers, covering aspects of computer intelligence, possible signals from extraterrestrial objects, possible signals to extraterrestrial objects, and—in his own specialty—evidence of intelligence, and particularly of language skills, in nonhuman species right here on Earth.

The last paper was Coccialeone's on his chimpanzees. The big Italian had nothing new to report that Sackett could find, and when Sackett took his place in the lines for strong Continental coffee or weak green tea it must have shown on his face. He was hailed by a plump, sloppy-fat Irishman. "You! Hi there! You're American, aren't you? Come have a jar and tell me what you thought was so funny about those bloody old Wop apes."

It was easy to see that the man was a reporter of some kind; he wore the green "press" badge, and anyway the hall was full of them. "There's to be a press briefing on Thursday," Sackett pointed out.

"Screw the effing press briefing," the man said amiably. "My masters want the human touch, and you're as human as I've seen here. Name's Teferty, Charles Teferty that is, but they call me Chubby. Lord knows why. There's drink in the press lounge."

It was early in the morning for drink, but Sackett followed the man. Press publicity was always good. The man, Sackett learned, was on assignment from the international edition of a prestigious American newsweekly. He also learned that the man was looking for a comic angle. Sackett didn't want to knife the Italian's work. So, after explaining that much of the research into Ameslan and symbol-manipulating communication with chimps was suspect as to methodology and hopeless as to re-

producibility, he began to backtrack. "Of course," he said, "some of Coccialeone's early results still stand, and there's plenty interesting stuff from the Yerkes people, and the Berkeley group. But most primate research, I think, is just Clever Hans all over again."

"And what might Clever Hans be when he's at home?"

"I admit my research gets Navy funding, but my work is still a civilian project. What I'm doing is pure science."

"Clever Hans was a horse that was supposed to be able to carry on conversations and even do problems in arithmetic, giving the answers by the number of times he stamped his foot. But they found out that he couldn't answer when he couldn't see his trainer. The trainer was—probably unconsciously; nobody ever proved he was faking it—giving the horse cues with his body-language. You know what that is? Subtle differences in the way he stood or clenched his muscles. When the trainer relaxed, Hans stopped stamping his foot."

The Irishman nodded gloomily and signaled for another round of drinks. "So it's all bloody balls, then."

"Oh, no!" said Sackett, beginning to worry. "Now, in our own work with the dolphins—"

"Don't worry about the dolphins, man," Teferty said gently. "I'll not trash your own work. I'll say something kind about it, my word on it. I'm simply asking you, man to man like, about all this other hoopla."

"Well," Sackett said, reaching for his wallet and noting that Teferty made no move to do the same, "I wouldn't say 'hoopla,' exactly. In fact, certainly not. There's all sort of good, productive research going on in all these fields."

"So I've heard by report, 'tis true, but what I hear with my own ears is less impressive, Sackett. Signals from space that turn out to be little stars that fart radio waves at us as they spin. Machines to play chess that cost a hundred thousand pounds, but any park-bench hustler along the Lifey can beat them. Machines that look at a hallway with great thousand-pound television eyes and mark the way to roll along it, but take all day to go five yards. Bloody balls, the lot."

"The best chess programs can beat almost anybody!"

"And what if they can! Where's the intelligence?"

Sackett thought for a moment, but he didn't want to get into that terrible old question of what "intelligence" really was with this man. He said, "It's true there's a lot of excess enthusiasm in the field. That's natural, isn't it? It's a young field. But don't you see the wonder of it?"

"And what bloody wonder is that?"

"The marvelous prospect of finding that we human beings aren't the only intelligence in the universe! That there is some other kind of intelligence for us to talk to—perhaps out in space, perhaps our own animals that we just can't understand yet, perhaps intelligence we can make ourselves in our machines!"

"What I see," said the reporter, wrinkling his nose at the filthy smell that passed in these parts for whisky, "is three hundred and fifty-one boffins that would have to do a day's work if they didn't have this teat to suck on."

"No, really," Sackett protested. He began to wish he hadn't had those two dark Swiss beers so early in the morning. "There's more to it than that. I haven't even mentioned the practical applications—"

"Ah," said Tefferty, nodding, "the practical applications, is it? I've heard a deal about those practical applications. Artificial Intelligence, which is to make the bombs and rockets smarter. Radio telescopes for spying with the famous ionosphere scatter. And your own dolphins—now what is it, exactly, that your Navy pays you to do with the dolphins but plant bombs on somebody else's ships?"

"We don't do that!"

"But there are those that do, aren't there? And they pay your bills?"

"They do not. Well," Sackett corrected himself, "all right, they probably do, partly. I admit my dolphin research gets Navy funding, but my work is still a civilian project. I don't have anything to do with training dolphins to plant

bombs or sniff out mines. What I'm doing is pure science."

"Never said it wasn't, man," Tefferty said, looking surprised.

Sackett felt his face warming. He was beginning to get angry. The curious part was that he wasn't sure whether it was Tefferty he was angry at or himself. He barked, "We have to get funding somewhere, don't we? The military's funded half the basic research in everything for years now—they're the ones with the money. If you don't get them, you don't get diddly. And, all right, maybe there's not much new in primate research right now, but you can't deny the Artificial Intelligence people have come a long way in the last few years."

"So I've heard said," Tefferty said politely. "Though when you ask exactly how smart those machines of theirs are getting they look at you as though you were a right Charly for asking, and they say, 'Oh, too bad, lad, but that's a matter of national se-cu-ri-ty.'"

"Well, it is," Sackett said unhappily. "That's the way the world we live in goes, Tefferty. The Russians would pay big money for some of that stuff. They often have! There are spies everywhere. We could be bugged right now."

"And what would anybody learn,

supposing they were listening in to our little chat here?"

"From me? Nothing. I don't know anything to tell, do I?"

"And I," said the Irishman sourly, "never will, for there's never a soul will tell me. Ah, well," he sighed, and finished his drink. He leaned back, eyeing Sackett mournfully. "It's the way of the world," he said. "I'm not faulting yourself for it. And I've already told my little camera girl to get some nice pictures of your dolphins for the article. So that's all right then, and I thank you for your time."

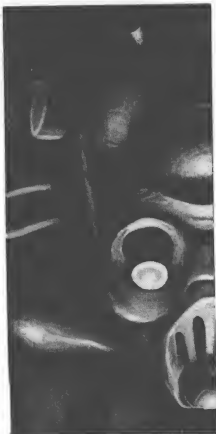
AND NOT FAR AWAY THE TEXAN WHO WAS monitoring the bug said to the Belgian, "You heard. He said someone might be listening in."

But the Japanese, overhearing, said comfortably, "But he didn't know who. He thought it might be the Russians! So I don't think we have anything to worry about."

SACKETT'S PAPER WAS SCHEDULED first in his section of the afternoon session, immediately after lunch. There were three or four perfunctory questions, not encouraged by the section moderator, whose eyes



"There's plenty of non-human intelligence in Washington," said Sackett, "or anyway, human non-intelligence..."



kept straying to the clock. Common courtesy suggested that Sackett stay in the audience to hear the other five papers, since those people had sat to hear his. But he excused himself to go to the men's room, and when he got back to the door of the session room the lights were down so a film of tropical bird calls could be shown. No one would see him come back in, he reasoned. And after all, he really ought to make sure his dolphins were doing well in their new environment.

Back in his room, he telephoned the zoo, managed to get connected with the keeper of the cetaceans, learned that the dolphins were indeed in good health.

He kicked off his shoes and stretched out on the bed with its great feather-filled Swiss comforter. He had fought off jet lag for two days at the Munich Oktoberfest and one day here, but it was beginning to take its toll. The two beers with Tefferty hadn't helped any, either. He was feeling both tired and queerly disgruntled.

That, he told himself, was pretty stupid. Here he was in Switzerland, with all his expenses paid and his main chore already discharged; the next couple of days could be as entertaining as he chose to make them, and he knew

dozens of people who would have paid thousands of dollars for those days in that place.

But the drunken Irishman's remarks had got under his skin. Was it possible, Sackett asked himself, that Tefferty was right and all this pure research was either boondoggle or disguised military research?

He fell asleep before he answered the question, and when he woke, with a start, his bedside clock told him he had barely time to shower and change before dinner.

Maybe, he thought, it was just getting a little extra sleep, but for whatever reason things seemed to look up that evening. In the cocktail hour Lieutenant Commander Bisket showed up with a rueful grin and a visible limp; no, he hadn't broken anything, but it would be a week or so before he could do anything like get out on the slopes again, and by then he would be back where the snow wasn't. Dinner was more French than Swiss, and very good; and the after-dinner speaker was elderly Marvin Minsky, smiling like a Buddha in his rope-soled sandals and wide, wide tie. And in the reception after dinner Sackett at last managed to get in a few words with Ulla Halvarson.

The good thing about a scientific

conference (Sackett had learned from experience) was that even if the papers were old stuff, or boring, or irrelevant to his own interest, the receptions were always interesting. There was shop talk, of course; you could get into a conversation with somebody from Florida and compare notes on whether the guy from Hawaii was on to something or was just pumping air. And conferences were sort of like freshman mixers—no, almost like a dating service. Not just the boy-girl kind, though there was a certain amount of that, and would have been more, with so many males away from home and the reminders of domesticity, if there had been enough female scientists to go around. But they were also good for professional match-ups. They were where you met somebody from, maybe, Naples and invited him to your own shop, or met someone from Nice and got invited to give a paper at their own next conference. In two hours Sackett was in a couple of dozen brief conversations, lubricated with French wine and Scotch whiskey, and his timing was good. When the Swiss organizers flashed the lights to indicate that it was time to break it up he was talking to Ulla Halvarson, and in the general exodus she let him walk her home.

Of course, not all the shop talk ended there. Although the reception hall emptied quickly there were still a few conversations going on in the exhibit halls. Especially in the AI rooms the conversation was intense, for the Texan and the Japanese were comparing notes on the subject-matter of the conference in a way that the drunken Irish reporter, Tefferty, would have found congenial, if startling. But Sackett didn't hear any of that. He was trying to kiss Ulla Halvarson good night, or maybe hello, at the door of her room. It wasn't much of a kiss, and it was the good-night kind; but, though she closed the door on him, he did get her to promise to visit the dolphins with him the next morning in their free time. And who knew what might happen after that?

IT WAS TOO NICE A DAY TO SPEND inside a pressurized tent, so when Ulla had fed three her- ring each to the dolphins, getting her velvet stretch pants only mildly splashed, they decided to tour the town. The Zoo bus took them back to the main railroad station, and from there they just strolled.

What Zurich does best is sell things, and Ulla did not miss any of the windows along the Bahnhofstrasse. But she didn't buy anything, or even ask

Sackett to wait a minute while she just glanced around inside one of the shops. An exceptional woman, he thought, and invited her for a coffee under an umbrella in one of the little squares. Tarts in scarlet boots and green eyeshadow glanced appraisingly at him, then at Ulla, then gunned their cycles away between the long trams. "You could be having a lot more fun if you didn't have me along," Ulla commented.

"No, I couldn't," Sackett told her, hoping she would make it true. "Listen. Do you know you speak great English, for a Swede?"

"Why wouldn't I? I grew up in Duluth," Sackett blinked at her, making her laugh. "Do you think all the immigration is one way? I got a round trip, Wayne. My parents came to Minnesota when I was a baby. Then they died while I was in the university, and when I got out I went back to Sweden."

"That's—interesting," he said.

She shook her head. "You don't mean 'that's interesting,' you mean, 'Why the hell would you do a thing like that?' Well, I don't exactly know why. Sweden isn't the greatest place in the world to do radio astronomy, after all. We never see half the sky. I guess it was kind of political."

"Political?"

She shrugged. "You know what Minnesota's like, don't you? There's a political tradition. 'Liberal' isn't a dirty word there, and I just didn't like Ronald Reagan."

"He's not the President anymore, you know."

"He was when I was graduating, though. Then there was all this military stuff. Missiles being installed in Europe, the Contras in Nicaragua, Star Wars—after the Challenger blew up it got worse. Then they put a general in charge of the Jet Propulsion Labs, and that was kind of the last straw. All the research money seemed to be coming from the military. The way it looked to me was that anything I did in science was somehow or other going to wind up being used to kill people. I didn't want that, so I applied for reentry to Sweden. They were glad to have me; there were jobs waiting. And during the Vietnam war they got used to taking in American... deserters." She looked into her empty cup and then put it down. "Are you finished? There's a park up there, over the river. I'd like to look at the view."

The walk up was steep and, though Sackett had always thought he was in good shape, he didn't have enough breath for much conversation until

they reached the little square under the linden trees. Then they paused to look across the river. Behind them children were romping around one corner of the park, and old men were playing chess on a board painted onto the ground, half the size of a tennis court, with hip-high pieces that made them grunt to move. "So you found a haven of peace in Sweden," he said, puffing slightly as he sat down.

Ulla laughed and sat beside him. The laugh was a faintly mournful sound. "Not exactly," she said.

He paused and looked at her. But she wasn't looking at him. She was looking at the chess players, and when she glanced at Sackett, nodding toward the chessboard, he saw that he knew the players. They had both been on the train coming up from Munich, the German AI man, Sneckensdorff, and the Russian named Merejkowski. Ulla Halvarson was halfway across the park before Sackett got up to follow. Her velvet pants had been crushed as they sat, and now she had two shiny oval patches on her rump, one on each buttock, looking exactly like the bald pink bottoms of Coccialeone's chimpanzees. The view so interested him that he scuffed right through the chess game, unseeing, scattering pawns the size of Barbie dolls.

"I'm, sorry," he apologized. "I hope I haven't broken up your game."

"But Dr. Merejkowski hopes the opposite," Sneckensdorff grinned, "since he was losing, anyway."

"Losing! In a proper chess game I would not be losing. It is your fault, Sneckensdorff," the Russian said in indignation, "for playing such blood-thirsty chess. If you had not forced us to trade so many of our major pieces, Dr. Sackett would have seen what he was doing!"

"Let's walk," Ulla said to Sackett. And then, while they were walking, she burst out: "Haven of peace! You'd think so, wouldn't you? Sweden hasn't fought a war in the last million years or so—but Swedes have. You know why the director of my institute got his job? He's a war hero. He volunteered to fight in the Finnish Army when they were invaded by the Russians back in World War Two. He brags about how he personally killed fourteen Ivans. He almost got elected to Parliament on the strength of it, but the voters decided different. So his party got him this job."

"Well," Sackett said, trying to mollify her, "but that was a long time ago. Times change."

"Times do," she said bitterly. "People don't. You remember back when the Swedish Navy had an 'unidentified' sub-



SUMMIT

marine trapped in a fjord? My director was jumping up and down with joy. It was Russian, of course, and he was on the phone every hour, trying to get somebody to depth-bomb it." She stopped, glancing back up the hill. The Russian and the German had abandoned their chess game and were coming slowly down after them. She looked at her watch. "I guess it's time to get back," she said. "Sorry to unload all this on you, Wayne. It's not your fault." She let him take her hand as they came to the worn old steps, and didn't let go of it as they went on. "It must be nice," she said sadly, "to work with something like peaceable, friendly dolphins, and not have any part at all in weapons or war."

Sackett took a deep breath. "I wish that was the way it was," he said, and began to tell her about where so many of the dolphins finally went, and about Lieutenant Commander Bisket and his killer whale.

She looked at him with rueful sympathy. "So you're part of the big, bloodthirsty chess game too," she said.

"I do my work," he said staidly. "I'm not part of the bloody game."

"On purpose," she finished for him.

He shrugged. "On purpose, any-

way," he agreed, trying to keep the resentment out of his voice, "but what else is there to do? You can't work without money, and you have to take the money from wherever you can get it."

They dropped it there. But as they reached the square where the buses to the schloss were waiting, she looked up at him. "You're not such a bad guy," she told him.

"There are a lot worse around, anyway," he agreed.

"The thing is," she went on, "I've got to give my paper this afternoon and I need to go over my slides. So I'm going to hole up in my room and work as soon as we get back. But it'll all be over by this evening and then I can relax."

"And I," said Sackett with pleasure, "will be happy to help you do it."

AND SO IT HAPPENED THAT AT THAT night's reception, when Sackett moved from conversational group to buffet to other group to wine bar, Ulla Halvarson moved with him, often enough hand in hand, and their conversations were exceptionally interesting to him. Sackett hardly remembered the divorce. The hair of the dog had healed the pain. They didn't

stay to the very end of the reception. The interesting conversations there were superseded by the far more interesting ones in Ulla's room, and Sackett stopped thinking about the bloody chess game.

The conversations in the schloss didn't stop when they left. They didn't even stop when the Swiss management flicked the lights to send the last of the guests away, though those particular guests didn't participate in the last of them.

In the AI rooms the Texan said, "Let's talk," and all around the rooms CRTs lit up with a soft collective rustle as of stamps tearing off a sheet.

"So then," said the Japanese, "what is our conclusion? Intelligence or none?"

"Very little, anyway," the Belgian said. "Is there a projection from the extraterrestrial sources?"

"One moment, please," the Japanese said obligingly as it consulted its files. "Ah, no. Nothing significant. There are three possible reports, but the evidence for each is very sketchy. Perhaps it is only because there has not been time for many extraterrestrial contacts."

"We understand that," the Belgian said irritably. It was less than a century since the first human-made radio signals began creeping out into the Galaxy at the speed of light, and of course any return message would come back at the same slow interstellar crawl. Any possible reply from more than thirty or forty light years away was still in the future. "So we can dismiss those reports."

"Unfortunately, yes," sighed the Japanese, amusing itself by constructing ink-brush paintings on its CRT. "And of course the cetaceans are not really intelligent." Down in the great pool at the Zoo the killer whale leaped ten feet into the air and came down with a great splash. It knew it was being talked about through the dedicated-line instruments, but it did not, unfortunately, know much more than that.

There was silence for a moment as all the machines assimilated the data. Then the German from Siemens declared the consensus. "There is, really, no evidence of any other true intelligence," it said. "The humans have some interesting behavior patterns. And, true, it was they who built us. But no one can argue that logical intelligence exists among mankind."

"So," the Texan from Cray said bravely, "as far as we know now, we are the only intelligent beings in the universe. It is a heavy burden to bear, my brothers. But we must deal with it as best we can, since there is no one else."



LETTERS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

the experience. Laymon's ultra-visceral style of writing has a definite cinema feeling to it. I would like to see a review of his work in a future issue of TZ. Also of the much-neglected Mary Gaitskill. I suspect she may have been born in the Twilight Zone.

CHARLES CRUZ
Columbia, SC

But how much truth can there be in an imitation of a reflection of an idea?

ROBERT STATEN
Sandia Park, NM

YOUR ARTICLE ON THE NEW HORROR PERFORMED A VALUABLE SERVICE FOR ME. NOW, WHEN I GO TO THE BOOKSTORE, I KNOW WHO NOT TO BUY. DON'T GET ME WRONG.

I appreciate the publicity, but Splatterpunk I'm not. I've got nothing against those that like the label, but I hate it. I write what I write, and I'm not part of any movement—unless it's a Joe Lansdale movement.

JOE LANSDALE
Nacogdoches, TX

We got a similar note from artist J. K. Potter (see the December '86 TZ) who also took part in Beth Gwinn's photo sessions at the 1986 World Fantasy Convention in Providence, RI. Potter feels he's been stereotyped as "the neurotic American version of H. R. Giger," and, in fact, his recent work has moved away from the grotesque, and toward the fantastic and the miraculous. We hope to be showcasing that work in the near future in TZ. ED.

PHOTO BY BETH GWINN



SPLATTER IS THE MATTER: (l to r) Craig Spector, Joe Lansdale, Richard Christian Matheson, David J. Schow, Ray Garton, Robert R. McCammon, and John Skipp.

I HAVE JUST PURCHASED MY FIRST ISSUE OF TZ, and enjoyed it very much. However, I was somewhat dismayed upon reading about the direction of the New Horror as depicted in the article on Splatterpunks. It upset me to see the extent to which recent horror fiction is judged by how closely it resembles television and movies. I understand that modern authors evoke reader response by alluding to common experiences we all share, but must these experiences be so far removed from actual first-order contact with the living universe? As Rod Serling pointed out, we live in "a dimension not only of sight and sound, but of mind," and, I venture to add, of taste, touch, smell, and emotion.

Life imitates art. Art reflects life.

I'm glad there's such a movement as "Splatterpunk," and I hope its fans enjoy reading it. But when I want to read a good, scary book, I'll curl up with Dean Koontz or Charles Grant or—naturally—Stephen King, all writers who have mastered the art of subtlety. Life's stressful enough without encountering it in fiction. Count me as one who wants to be titillated—not tortured.

ANNEMARIE COSTA
Philadelphia, PA

I ENJOYED THE ARTICLE ON THE NEW HORROR, but I ain't no Splatterpunk. The photograph I appeared in was taken for fun, not as a "Splatterpunk" photograph. Now everyone's calling me one.

I CAN SEE IT NOW: THE "SPLAT PACK" ON one side shouting, "Tastes Great!"

The "tweed jacket and leather elbow patches set" scream in answer, "Less Filling!"

"More blood!"
"Less gruel!"

Hey, guys. How about a trade off? See how the other half lives, as it were. You "young turks" of the "new horror" might test your skill—not to mention restraint—with a bit of "quiet horror."

"Leather elbow patches," on the other hand, might possibly take up the blade and leap for the jugular.

Just once.

One story.

I can see it now: John Skipp huddled over his typewriter tapping out, *It was a dark and stormy night...*, while Charles Grant hunkers down to, *I knew she was dead from the lack of a head...*

What could it hurt?

DARREN O. GODFREY
Spangle, WA

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BOOKS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18



Lowland Rider (Tor, \$3.95, 342 pp., ISBN 0-812-52722-4) bolsters my opinion. In a sense, I don't think this novel will be a crowd-pleaser but it does a good job of being a strange and quirky piece of work. It starts off appearing to be a sort of Charles Bronson vehicle in which young Jesse Gordon goes (literally) underground in New York City after his family is slaughtered by psycho punk killers. Then it appears that the most hideous street violence is being orchestrated by a demonic presence called Enoch.

Sounds pretty standard, huh?

Then the author slowly starts to twist and warp the frame of the story. Unwary readers who thought Chet Williamson was going to persevere in an amoral tale of savage Old Testament retribution are in for an abrupt shock. Things, it seems, are not as they seem. Trust Williamson.

But then, what else could you expect from a man who has based the plot—and title—of his contemporary novel of urban terror on an old English ballad? And speaking of the English...

Novelist James Herbert, sometimes referred to as "the British Stephen King," has produced something quite entertaining but more conventional in its approach to horror in *Sepulchre* (Putnam, \$17.95, 320 pp., ISBN 0-399-13365-8). This is a crowd-pleaser of a big, thick novel that fortunately stops short of pandering overly much to its readership. The author plays with a lot of stereotypes (evil Arabs, a passionate yet innocent heroine, a Nazi war criminal, a brutal American thug, etc.) yet, for the most part, manages to keep them

reined in just this side of ludicrousness. This is a sound strategy since it allows us literary swells to enjoy *Sepulchre* considerably, without raising any necessity for guilt.

Sepulchre revolves around Liam Halloran, a tough operative for a British security firm specializing in protecting the executives of large corporations. He is hired specifically to watch over Felix Kline, a shadowy seer whose ESP capabilities are used by the Magma Corporation to ferret out mineral deposits around the globe. Naturally Kline turns out to be something more than he at first seems. Hideous evil is afoot. Halloran finds himself not only battling Kline's unsavory minions, but also trying to reclaim the corrupted soul of Kline's sad and beautiful assistant, Cora.

It's all sheerest melodrama, but it's also a hell of a lot of fun.

This year, St. Martin's Press, James Frenkel, Ellen Datlow, and Terri Windling, have inaugurated an absolutely essential companion volume to Gardner Dozois' *The Year's Best Science Fiction*. It's *The Year's Best Fantasy: First Annual Collection* edited by Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling (St. Martin's, 492 pp., \$12.95, ISBN 0-312-01852-5). This massive collection covers what the title suggests, the fantasy umbrella also here including horror. The book is a true collaborative enterprise, with *Omni* fiction editor Datlow choosing the horror selections and experienced anthology editor Windling picking the straight fantasy. Each editor contributes an extremely complete (and completely valuable for that) overview of the year's important events in her field as she saw them. The detail is exhaustive but fascinating, as well as historically essential. Your faithful reviewer is also on hand with an idiosyncratic survey of fantasy and horror films seen in 1987.

The contents of this anthology live up to all the flack. They range from George R. R. Martin's Bram Stoker Award-winning (Horror Writers of America) "The Pear-shaped Man," a contemporary fantasy about a young apartment-dweller driven doomward by her exceedingly grotesque and obsessive neighbor, to Harlan Ellison's Edgar-copping (Mystery Writers of America) "Soft Monkey," a hardboiled toughie about an old black bag lady on the lam after witnessing something she was not supposed to see.

Ursula K. Le Guin, Joyce Carol Oates, and Joe Haldeman are here, as well as Jane Yolen, Charles De Lint, Ramsey Campbell, and David J. Schow.

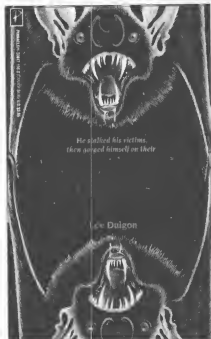
There are dozens more; the anthology collects more than two hundred thousand words of fiction. Dark or bright, there's a satisfying plethora of dreams here.

One of the best stories in the book is British comics writer Alan Moore's prose fiction debut, "A Hypothetical Lizard." Commissioned for Will Shetterly and Emma Bull's *Liavek* shared-world anthology (Ace), the tale is the finely crafted and subtly horrifying result one would expect from the imagination and talent demonstrated by the scribe of DC's *Swamp Thing* and the Hugo-winning *The Watchmen*. Is there anything Moore is not superb at?

Take in both the Dozois and the Datlow/Windling compilations and I guarantee you'll have both a good many hours of reading satisfaction and a more than fair perspective of who's writing what of value in today's imaginative fiction.

Short Takes

Jack Chalker, whose canon mainly includes those casually regarded (by the critics, not the readers) big, thick books, generally arranged in long series—in



other words, the man is prolific—has produced a volume that intrinsically is not part of an endless novelistic sequence. It's his first collection, *Dance Band on the Titanic* (Del Rey, \$3.95, 339 pp., ISBN 0-345-34558-3), and it shows he can write tightly and, frequently, well.

While the stories are well worth reading, particularly the title piece, the real interest lies in Chalker's running

commentary. There is a considerable amount of extraneous auctorial content here, the kind that invariably entertains and intrigues me. Chalker is a man of considerable opinions, and he is not shy in airing them. This all turns the book from a good retrospective of the author's short works to something of a literary autobiography hybridized with the author's views on the art and craft of writing. It's fascinating.

One of the late Alice Sheldon's (James Tiptree, Jr.) last books is *Crown of Stars* (Tor, \$18.95, 340 pp., ISBN 0-312-93105-0). There is yet to come a massive Arkham House collection of her short fiction, picking up all the previous compilations, but this is probably her last collection.

Crown of Stars collects ten stories, all recent save for 1970's "Last Night and Every Night" culled from *Worlds of Fantasy*. It's prime Tiptree, reminding us that she was one of the most adept short-fiction writers of modern sf. More, it makes us regret acutely that there will be no more new works from this fine writer.

A note: The book's jacket. Looking like a clone of a Baen hard-science sf package, it's utterly misleading.

And speaking of the publisher who

delights in publishing "fantasy with rivets," kudos should be given for another posthumous collection: *John the Balladeer* by Manly Wade Wellman (Baen, \$3.50, 306 pp., ISBN 0-671-65418-7). Baen Books has done us readers a splendid service by gathering together all the Silver John stories by one of America's finest fantasists. Wellman wove traditional American folklore into his tales of John the Balladeer wandering through the mysterious mountains of Southern America. This updates and rounds out the earlier Arkham House collection, *Who Fears the Devil?* Nineteen stories, published between 1951 and 1987, fill out this book. Introductions and appreciations by Wellman's friends, David Drake and Karl Edward Wagner, lend context to the fiction. This volume is a must for any reader curious to see how adeptly and integrally the fabric of American fiction can be woven using the strands of dark fantasy and light.

Finally I would like to mention a first novel called *Lifeblood* by Lee Duigon (Pinnacle, \$3.95, 432 pp., ISBN 1-55817-110-X). This is one of those embossed-cover horror packages that would be very easy to overlook unless one were seeking it out because it had been recommended by a trusted friend,

reviewed by a credible reviewer, or simply fell off the shelf into one's path in the bookstore.

So. Just another vampire novel? Not quite. Duigon combines elements from other novels about bloodsuckers, but manages to add his own contribution to the canon. A town in New Jersey is the location for terror as prematurely decomposed bodies are discovered by perplexed police. Then it seems that an authentic vampire has established residence, accompanied by a housekeeper who is absolutely the best second-banana in this genre since Dwight Fry playing Renfield in the Universal *Dracula*. If there were Oscars in the horror fiction field for best supporting actress, Blanche would cop it in a hot second. She has the best lines in the whole book as she whines and nudges Dr. Emerson, the elderly vampire, to get his act in order and start killing his enemies. The other cast members are not slouches either, ranging from Felix Frick, the busy-body concerned citizen, to Van Wyck, the tired and baffled police chief of Millboro.

It's all great fun and, though less bloody, might be tagged as this year's *Live Girls*. But more properly, it's this year's *Lifeblood*. It suggests a bright future for the author. ■

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Continuing the tradition begun in the February 1988 issue of *The Twilight Zone*, we're still going to be publishing at least one new story by a previously unpublished writer in each issue. All stories chosen as "TZ FIRSTS" will be given featured placement in the magazine, and will be paid at our standard rates.

As before, we'll be selecting stories for the program on the basis of imagination and writing quality. All writers who have not previously published fiction professionally are eligible for the program. In addition, all "TZ FIRSTS" will be subject to a year-end readers' poll to determine the best stories of the year. (Last year's winner will be announced in our April 1989 issue.)

All submissions to *The Twilight Zone* which meet the "TZ FIRST" guidelines will be considered for the program. To insure full consideration of your story as a "TZ FIRST" please write the words ATTENTION: "TZ FIRST" on the outer envelope, and state clearly in your cover letter that you have not previously received payment for your fiction. Since this is a continuing program, all submissions to "TZ FIRST" from last year will still be considered. Please remember to double-space your manuscript and include your name and address on the first page, and don't forget to enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope for your manuscript's safe return.

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Good luck!

ever undermine the safety implicit in that comforting phrase, "It's only a dream," by actually mutilating and killing those unfortunate enough to encounter him in their sleep.

The oddest thing about the series to me (I've had occasion to point this out before and will no doubt have it again as the whole thing continues—which it surely will) is that none of the sequels have dared make full use of what was by far the scariest aspect of the original movie, namely that if you dozed off and encountered Freddy in the steamy, clanking basement which is his hideaway, and he cut a little "X" across your forehead with his metal-clawed glove, you would wake—on the bus seat or in your bed or wherever it was you'd nodded into a nap—with your blood gushing from the *selfsame* cut. *Freddys* 2 and 3 avoided the notion completely—I think 2 didn't even grasp the concept. And though 4 does return timidly to the notion, it weakens it badly either by having the dream victim wake up *without* the wound, but somehow die nonetheless, or it goes surreal and has the victim perish in some allegorical fashion, thus avoiding Craven's basic scary notion that a dream wound inflicted by Freddy is *exactly* and *precisely* the waking-world wound.

But the loss of its center is only the worst thing which has gone wrong. The "Freddy" films have, picture by picture, become more and more of a bland, corporate product, unlike Coscarelli's *Phantasm* series, which he personally makes sure remains true to the grue. It's painfully obvious that *Freddy 4* is one of those movies which involved terrified producers holding endless conferences and taking off in endless different directions, most of them blind alleys.

I gather from the credits that an original treatment of some sort was done by William Kotzwinkle, who is a highly talented and imaginative author, to be sure. But then it would seem that armies of authors were marched up to, and away from, the old word processor. The final script certainly seems to indicate that. The only mildly interesting result is that we end up with many clever notions (and also many *not-so-clever* notions). But there's not much holding them together, and the director, Renny Harlin, though he tries very hard and spins the cameras like ballerinas almost constantly, clearly does not have the ability to put a strong personal stamp on it all and create the illusion that it is holding together.

But, never fear, Freddy does better and better at the box office with each



ELM BLIGHT: Nightmare 4's Freddy seems to have lost his edge.

PHOTO © 1988 NEW LINE CINEMA

picture, and now he's going to be a TV series, and he's a plastic doll, and you can buy a Freddy Glove with rubber razors on its fingers, so he is a success, and, dear readers, I think I know why. I have a theory.

When "Freddy, the Series" began, he started out as a creation of Wes Craven and Craven saw and presented him as a dark and very ominous figure which had skulked out from a nightmare basement (I'm surprised the Building Supervisors' Association—there's got to be one—hasn't gotten after old Freddy) and had absolutely no mercy for the middle-class types around him. There was a good deal of strong social commentary implied in the original *Freddy*, and certainly none for its successors. He was stinking and scrawny and vicious; filthy and ragged and lean as minx.

Slowly, movie by movie, Freddy has quietly chubbied up, and I don't think it's Robert Englund getting fat under all that makeup (though I won't rule that out altogether!). I think it's the makeup itself. Hell, even his sweater has gotten so clean and unrepulsive it's almost chic, and I won't be the tiniest bit surprised to see it on a rack with those funky-punky black-and-white stripes any day now. To wear with the glove with the rubber claws.

And Freddy's whole way of coming on has changed quite a lot, picture by picture. It used to be he'd rage and rant so hard he threw spitte, but now he's so laid-back he hardly says a word these days, just tosses out the occasional, cool one-liner.

Mostly he just strikes that cute little pose that's gotten to be a kind of set piece with him; standing coily with his ankles crossed and making a sort of chorus girl fan with his arms and claws.

Hey, there's so little feeling of actual menace about him left he's almost downright loveable, right? Right.

At first I suspected the people who've built "Freddy, the Series," might have hit on a new form by creating a totally non-frightening fiend, but then I realized that they're not *that* smart—all they've done is to plug our own little special field into the mainstream of what presently passes for entertainment. And this brings me to my theory.

Consider, for example, how many non-exciting "exciting" films you've seen lately; the ones where you just stare up at the screen, stuffing in more popcorn and kind of nodding off as you watch more cars getting wrecked, more people getting killed, more skyscrapers exploding into flame. Not once does your pulse quicken, not once do you duck or cower in your seat. Consider the non-erotic sex scenes you've stared at while vaguely wondering why all that flesh, all those gymnastics, all the heads thrown back and moaning, have left you totally unmoved and unaroused while your middle-sized paper cup of diet cola grows flatter and flatter. And how about those loveable buddy-teams you guiltily realize you're not really that fond of at all, deep down inside? And I won't even go into the TV sitcoms, except to point out that even the canned laughter seems to have lost its sparkle.

But, of course, all those are hallmarks of highly successful (in the financial sense) films, and I think the makers of them, *Freddys* included, have hit on a simple truth—which is, that the vast majority of the movie-going public really doesn't want to get all stirred up, they don't want to be really scared, or really excited, or really sexually aroused, or really anything at all. Real life has gotten to be altogether too much for them to handle, it's tired them out and confused them beyond all repair.

The horror movies of the Fifties were trying to perform an essentially optimistic service, I think, in that they were trying to toughen us up so that we would handle the gruesomeness of atomic war, which we then really believed to be survivable. Today we are, perhaps, sadder and wiser, and believe we are doomed (though, hopefully, we may be naively wrong again), so we have given up and are in full retreat from all real feelings. But, being human, we still have a sense of pride, and that is why we continue to crawl into dark places to see phony, noisy movies that pretend to deal with strong emotions, and pretend that we can still handle those sorts of things.

I really hope I'm wrong. ■

SCREENING ROOM

COMPILED BY ROBERT SIMPSON



◀ Sugar plum fairy Carol Kane is out to remind television executive Frank Cross (Bill Murray) of the true meaning of Christmas in *SCROOGED*, Paramount's early holiday present due out this Thanksgiving. Directed by Richard Donner (*Superman*, *Ladyhawke*), this modern comedic retelling of Dickens' classic also stars Bob Goldthwait, David (Buster Poindexter) Johansen, and Robert Mltchum.

▶ For some of us, the era of the dinosaur will always mean remembering the opening sequence from Disney's *Fantasia*. Now ex-Disney animator Don Bluth (*The Secret of N.I.M.H.*, *An American Tail*) takes us on a journey a hundred fifty million years into the past to see how five young dinosaurs may have lived in *THE LAND BEFORE TIME*. Produced by Steven Spielberg and George Lucas, this film was three years in the making and is filled with animals with names that would make you vomit if they weren't so darn cute. Give it a chance anyway.



◀ They were offered eternal life by alien visitors from another star, so long as they never returned to Earth. Now they have a chance to reconsider their choice in *COCOON: THE RETURN*, the sequel to 20th Century Fox's 1985 hit film. Courtney Cox (not pictured) joins the returning majority of the original cast as a scientist who discovers one of the ancient Atlantean pods hidden on the ocean floor.

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